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ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Slovenia has been catching up with other developed market economies. The economic situation has improved; the unemployment rate has declined. Slovenia's criticism of the 1980s educational reform carried out in Yugoslavia (which included Slovenia until 1991) and continued discussion have led to design of a new education system and necessary reform measures. New legislation for vocational education and training (VET) reform requires new forms of VET, review of all existing VET programs, enhanced teacher training and equipment, and more emphasis on certification as a framework for continuing education. One priority of the Government within VET reform has been to encourage social partnership and transfer part of responsibilities for the system to the partners. Special adaptations of VET to labor market and socioeconomic changes are in the areas of development of national standards and analyses of training needs, curriculum development, assessment and certification, recognition and transparency of qualifications, and teacher and trainer training. Human resource development has been affected by reform in continuing training and management and administrators' training. Foreign assistance in the reform effort has come from the Phare program, Leonardo da Vinci program, European Social Fund, and Phare Cross-Border Cooperation program. (Contains 82 references.) (YLB)

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Report on the vocational education and training system

NATIONAL OBSERVATORY COUNTRY REPORT

Slovenia

1999

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Modernisation of Vocational Education and Training in Slovenia

Final Report

Ljubljana
2000

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1. The economy

At the beginning of the 1990s, Slovenia set about catching up with other developed market economies. The level of gross domestic product achieved in 1987, when economic growth began to decline, was, finally, reached again in 1998. During that transformation period many structural changes took place, macroeconomic stabilisation was achieved and the main elements of the socially oriented market economy were put in place.

1.1 *Economic development*

1.1.1 *Gross domestic product and economic growth*

According to initial estimates, 1998 GDP at current prices was SIT 3,243.5 billion. Value added at basic prices increased nominally by 11.1% and net taxes on products by 14.4%. In comparison with 1997, GDP increased nominally by 11.6% in 1998. At current prices and exchange rates, 1998 GDP was USD 19,523 million, USD 9,847 per capita, which is 7.2% and 7.5%, respectively, more than in 1997. In ECU, 1998 GDP was nominally 8.1% higher at ECU 17,413 million and 8.3% higher, per capita, at ECU 8,783.

GDP per capita, at current prices in Purchasing Power Standards, increased by 19.5% between 1995 and 1998. Its 1998 per capita GDP of ECU 13,700 is 69% of the European Union average and makes it the most highly developed of all the candidate countries for accession to the European Union (National accounts, Rapid reports, No 205, 27 July 1999, Statistics Office).

Table 1.1 Main economic indicators

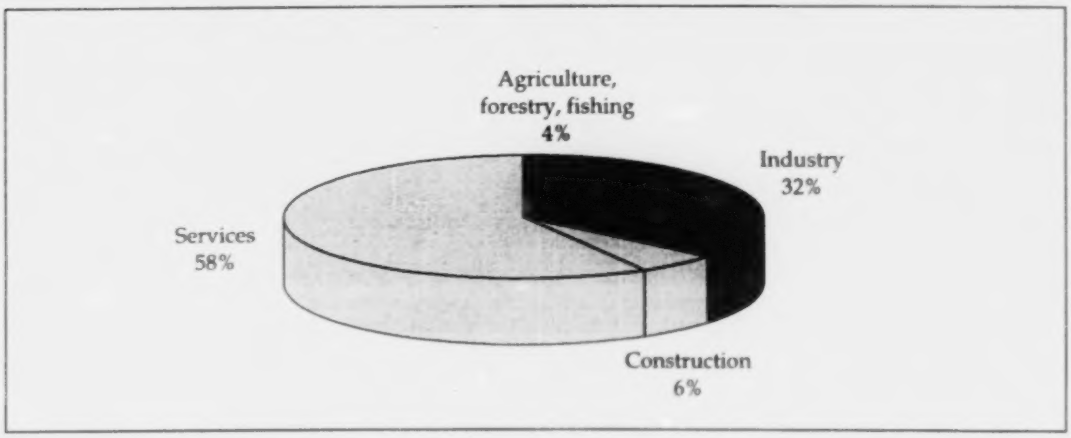
	1995	1996	1997	1998
GDP real growth rate in %	4.1	3.5	4.6	3.9
GDP in million SIT	2,221,459	2,555,369	2,907,277	3,243,490
GDP in million USD	18,744	18,878	18,206	19,523
GDP in million ECU	14,508	15,075	16,116	17,413
GDP per capita in USD	9,431	9,481	9,163	9,847
GDP per capita in ECU	7,300	7,571	8,111	8,783
GDP per capita in purchasing power standards in USD*	12,600	13,200	14,000	14,990
GDP per capita in purchasing power standards in ECU	11,300	12,200	13,000	13,700

** Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Slovenian Economic Mirror 1998, No 12*

Source: National Accounts, Rapid Reports, No 205, 27 July 1999, Statistics Office

The structure of value added by main fields of activity from 1995-1998 was very stable. While the share of value added of basic industries gradually declined from 42.1% of GDP in 1995 to 41.7% of GDP in 1998, it gradually increased in service activities from 57.9% in 1995 to 58.3% in 1998 (National accounts, Rapid reports, No 205, 27 July 1999, Statistics Office).

Chart 1.1 Value added by activities, 1998



Source: National accounts, Rapid reports, No 205, 27 July 1999, Statistics Office

According to initial estimates, real economic growth in 1998 was 3.9%, the average rate for the previous five years. Growth in 1996 was 3.5% and in 1997 was 4.6%. In 1998 value added grew most, by 5.4%, in transport, storage and communication, by 5.1% in manufacturing, by 4.2% in other community and personal services and by 4.1% in trade. The only activity where the volume of value added decreased in 1998 was in fishing. Value added grew by 4.4% in industry in 1998, compared to 5.4% in 1997, and by 3.5% in services, compared to 3.8% in 1997 (National accounts, Rapid reports, No 101, 15 April 1999, Statistics Office).

The main lever of economic growth in 1998 was foreign demand. The particularly fast growth in export demand in 1997, 11.3%, was followed by the first signs of moderation in 1998, when it slowed to 6.8%. Exports have stabilised in recent years at 55% of GDP. Within domestic demand which rose by 4.4%, investment is estimated to have recorded the highest growth at 11.3%, whilst government consumption also grew above average at 4.8% (Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Spring Report 1999).

Over the last four years, there have been positive developments in the GDP cost structure. Owing to lower rates of employers' compulsory social security contributions, and the fact that aggregate nominal gross wage and other labour costs rose less than the nominal increase in GDP, the share of total labour costs within GDP fell substantially, from 57.3% in 1995 to 52.5% in 1998. Owing to a reduction in customs tariffs and import duties, and an increase in some other taxes on production, taxes on production and imports was 17% in 1995 and 1997 and 17.4% in 1996 and 1998. In these circumstances, the share of business surpluses rose from 17.1% of GDP in 1995 to 21.8% of GDP in 1998. In 1998, the slowdown in labour productivity growth continued, dropping to 3.5% in 1998, compared to 3.8% in 1997 and 4.1% in 1996 (Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Spring Report 1999).

Because of its small size, relative openness and export orientation, economic growth in Slovenia, in 1999, will be determined, primarily, by international economic trends and the export competitiveness of its economy. The export of goods and services represent 55% of national GDP.

Taking into account current economic trends in international and domestic environments, and forecasts by European institutes and international organisations that economic and import growth in Slovenia's most important trading partners will be somewhat lower, 3.5 to 4% economic growth can be expected next year (Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Autumn Report 1998).

1.1.2 Foreign direct investment

During the1993-1997 period, both the level of foreign direct investment and the annual amounts of foreign direct investment inflow increased in Slovenia. The highest rise was seen in 1997 with inflows soaring by 72.5% compared to 1996. However, in 1998 inflow almost halved, falling from USD 320.8 million to USD 165 million, and the overall foreign direct investment stock is estimated at about USD 2.4 billion for the year. Because of the modest inflow in 1998 and because foreign-owned companies perform better than domestic ones, thus enhancing the competitive advantage of the Slovenian economy, the Government decided to set up an Interdepartmental Working Group for Promoting Foreign Investment in 1998 (Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Slovenian Economic Mirror 3/99).

Apart from the small size of the Slovenian market, the main factors influencing the reduction of foreign direct investment in Slovenia are:

(i) an incomplete legal framework for regulating corporate activities and discrimination in favour of certain categories of companies, which increases the costs of establishing and operating a company;

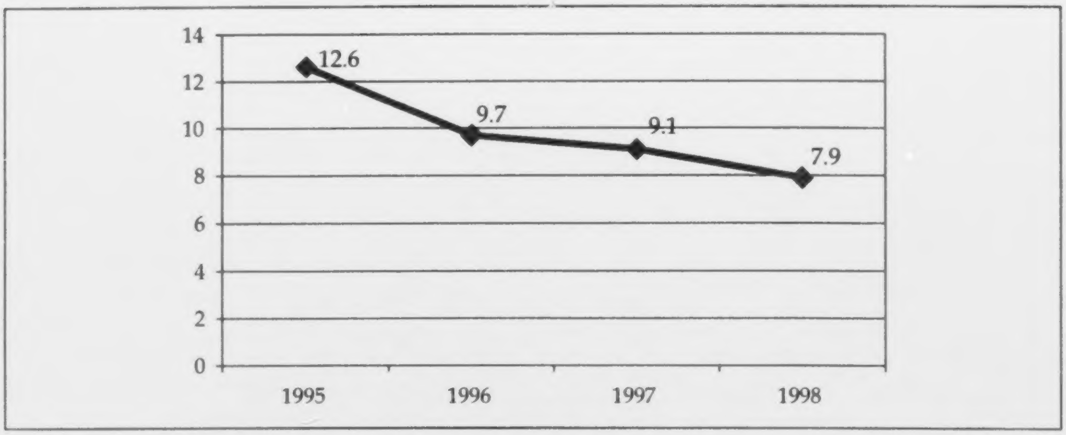
(ii) problems in finding business premises and land, especially for production purposes; and

(iii) insufficient privatised companies, especially those with predominant domestic ownership, which would encourage them to search for strategic foreign partners (Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Autumn Report 1998).

1.1.3 Inflation

When monetary independence was introduced in October 1991, two-digit monthly inflation rates were recorded but, by the end of 1995, it had fallen to a one-digit annual rate. The fall continued into the period after 1995, albeit at a slower rate, mainly due to severe price disparity corrections which maintained the average annual inflation rate at about 9% in 1996 and 1997.

Chart 1.2 *Inflation* in Slovenia, 1995-1998*



** Retail prices as a measure of inflation until 1998, after 1998 consumer price index*

Source: National accounts, Rapid reports, No 205, 27 July 1999, Statistics Office

In mid-1998, growth in prices slowed substantially and by the end of 1998, the inflation rate was 6.5%, with the average annual rate falling to 7.9%. The slowdown in inflation during the second half of the year was a result of:

- the reduced impact from the changes in controlled prices and changed tax rates; and
- a long period of subdued wage growth caused by a fall in demand and pressure on prices, a fall in import prices and a real appreciation of the Tolar (Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Spring Report 1999).

1.1.4 Wages

Incomes policy is one of the major issues negotiated by the social partners. Even though a new social agreement was not achieved last year, an agreement on incomes policy parameters was reached and incorporated into the Minimum Wage and Wage Adjustment Mechanism Act. The agreement helped develop a successful incomes policy in 1997 and 1998 and represents an important contribution by social partnership to the macroeconomic stability of the country.

The agreement led to a slowdown in prices' growth in 1997, equivalent to 2.4% on the average gross wage per employee, in real terms, and also contributed to the slowing down of wages in 1998. Growth in wages is moderate in both the private and public sectors. The macroeconomic objective of lower growth in the gross wage per employee than in productivity growth was achieved (Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Autumn Report 1998).

Table 1.2 ***Gross and net average monthly incomes in the period 1995-1998, in SIT and USD***

Average monthly incomes	Average 1995		Average 1996		Average 1997		Average 1998	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
In SIT (rounded off)	112,000	71,000	129,000	82,000	144,000	91,000	158,000	100,000
In USD*	945	600	953	606	902	570	951	602

**at average exchange rate in period observed, rounded-off*

Source: Labour Market, Rapid Reports, March 29, 1999/No 92, Statistics Office, Statistics Yearbook 1997, 1998

In 1998, average monthly gross earnings amounted to SIT 158,069, which is, nominally, 9.6% and, in real terms, 1.6% more than in 1997. The average monthly net earnings in 1998 amounted to SIT 99,919 an increase of 9.6% on 1997. The share of contributions and taxes on gross earnings increased from 36.78% in 1997 to 36.79% in 1998 (Labour market, Rapid Reports, March 29, 1999/No 92, Statistics Office).

In 1998, the average monthly gross earnings increased in all sectors of activity: in agriculture by 10.4% to SIT 149,579; in industry by 10.8% to SIT 135,690; and in services by 8.6% to SIT 177,017. The highest average earnings, SIT 300,444, were in air transport and the lowest, SIT 94,474, in the manufacture of wearing apparel and fur processing.

The review of earnings by statistical regions shows that, in December 1998, the highest average monthly gross earnings, SIT 197,921, were paid in the central region of Slovenia and the lowest, SIT 140,288, in the region of Koroška (Carinthia) (Labour market, Rapid Reports, March 12, 1999/No 79, Statistics Office).

1.1.5 *Privatisation*

The transformation of company ownership, i.e., the transfer from the former state-ownership to the property of individual owners, is almost complete.

The Slovenian privatisation model for enterprises in public ownership was based on partially free distribution through a system of 'ownership certificates'. They were distributed to all citizens and have a major influence on the current ownership structure of companies. However, this structure does not yet conform entirely to the structures in other developed European countries and the transformation processes will continue for a number of years to come.

Privatisation has also led to the formation of investment companies. Because of the limited capital market these do not yet function as they should in a normal market economy.

Preparations are under way for the privatisation of state-owned property. This concerns, in particular, state-owned banks, insurance companies and infrastructure such as:

- energy supply and distribution;
- transport;
- communications;
- water distribution and other municipal public services; and
- urban and environmental infrastructures.

(Ministry of Economic Relations and Development).

The situation of the enterprise sector varies according to the type of ownership. Company financial results show a comparatively greater efficiency in the open and competitive private market economy. Losses are concentrated in non-privatised enterprises, mostly owned by the Slovenian Development Corporation, which are expected to disappear through restructuring, privatisation or liquidation, and in state-owned enterprises in the public utility sector. In 1996, these two categories together involved more than 20% of sales and more than 23% of employees of the Slovenian enterprise sector. In the other two categories, the newly privatised enterprises with majority internal and external ownership which account for 54% of total sales and for more than 62% of employees, restructuring is already well under way and operations overall are profitable (Joint Assessment of medium-term economic policy priorities of Slovenia, Sept. 1998).

While a large proportion of the socially-owned assets were transferred to the private sector, the World Bank, in its "Slovenia: Economic Transformation and European Union Accession" country study (World Bank, 1999), doubts whether firms have been truly privatised or just de-socialised, as there may not be a real difference between the self-management of socially-owned firms and the dispersed ownership of a joint stock company with state and insider control. In any case, the World Bank argues that the dominance of insiders' control after privatisation has implied less overall restructuring and efficient enterprise governance than one might have expected. Despite slow but steady improvement over the last three years the overall picture of the aggregate enterprise sector in Slovenia is one of sizeable losses.

To rejuvenate the process of enterprise reform, the World Bank, therefore, encourages the Slovenian Government to take a number of specific steps.

- Encourage better corporate governance in the privatised enterprise sector through a series of measures, such as strengthening protection of minority shareholders, improving the quality and disclosure of information by firms, enhancing bankruptcy procedures and increasing the enforcement capacity of the capital market regulatory agency.
- Advance the unfinished privatisation agenda in public utilities, state banks, residual stakes in already privatised enterprises etc.
- Accelerate the transposition of the Acquis, in order to improve the business climate to attract much-needed foreign direct investment and to stimulate enterprise and banking sector reforms. This, in turn, will reduce the cost of finance, improve performance and enhance the prospects for the enterprise sector to compete, on equal terms, in the Union's single market.

1.1.6 Small and medium-sized enterprises and self-employment

Small and medium-sized enterprises are of considerable significance in Slovenia because of their job-creating capacity and their contribution to improved competitiveness by introducing new technologies and products.

After 1990, the process of de-industrialising the economy, increasing the weight of the service sector, changing the structure in favour of small enterprises and internalising the economy led to an increase in the number of small enterprises.

The classification of companies according to size shows that in 1998 the largest number of companies, 93.7%, were small enterprises, followed by medium-sized enterprises, 4.2%, and large companies, 2.1%. The largest contribution to overall business results was made by large companies, which employed 57.4% of all workers while making 61.4% of total revenue and using 68.5% of the total assets of commercial companies. Small enterprises employed 24.9% of all workers while making 23.1% of total revenue and using 18% of total assets. The smallest contribution was made by medium-sized enterprises, which employed 17.7% of all workers, made 15.5% of total revenue, and used 13.5% of total assets (Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Spring report 1999).

Prior to 1998, the number of self-employed people slowly increased but in 1998 there was a sharp decline. At the end of December, there were 87,568 self-employed persons in Slovenia, compared to 92,688 in 1998, which, itself, was an increase of 0.5% on 1997. Self-employed traders constituted 49.5% of the total, 44.2% were farmers and 6.3% were people providing independent professional services. In 1998, the number of farmers fell by 9.6%, the number of self-employed traders by 2.4% and the number of people providing independent professional services by 5.7%.

The numbers employed by the self-employed increased in 1998. On average there were 60,827 people employed, or 4.6% more than 1997 (Employment Service, Annual Report 1998).

1.2 Regional development

Slovenia is divided into municipalities for administrative purposes. In 1998 a new administrative-territorial division was carried out which increased the number of municipalities, from the 147 which existed since 1 January 1995, to 163. The municipalities usually perform local tasks only, with the exception of city municipalities, which also perform specific tasks within the jurisdiction of the state but which relate to the development of the city. Municipalities are normally financed from their own sources but economically underdeveloped municipalities receive additional funding from the state.

The White Paper on Regional Development was completed at the beginning of 1999. Restructuring and the transition to a market economy have had different impacts on the economies of the regions. Broadly speaking, the relative situation of the economically more-developed regions has improved and that of economically less-developed regions has deteriorated.

Analysis of data from the early and late 1990s, reveals that the three regions that were in the group of economically more-developed regions - Central, Coastal-Karst, and Gorenjska regions - remain the most developed and have even improved their positions. This can be largely contributed to their diversified economic structure and the high level of educational qualifications, which in turn brought about a more successful adaptation to the rapid changes in the market. In the group of medium-developed regions with positive development potential, the Dolenjska region improved its position and joined the group of economically more-developed regions. The region of Goriška is also improving its position. The economic situation in both regions is relatively favourable: the financial results of the business sector are positive and the unemployment rate is below the average. The relative position of the Savinjska region, which was in the same group as Goriška and Dolenjska in the early 1990s, has deteriorated. The region's manufacturing industry is facing enormous difficulties and the unemployment rate has almost tripled since 1991. The relative position of all regions with a problematic economic structure but with some development potential, such as Podravska, Koroška, Posavska, and Zasavska, has deteriorated. They are predominantly industrial areas that were first hit by the restructuring process and have still not recovered. Their unemployment rates are above the Slovenian average, except in the Koroška region but here the unemployment rate is increasing. Relatively less-developed regions, such as Pomurska and Karst, whose economic structure was assessed as promising but experienced the impact of restructuring later than others now face difficult structural problems. Both regions also have very unfavourable demographic trends (Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Slovenian Economic Mirror 2/99).

By adopting the Act on the Promotion of a Balanced Regional Development on 16 June 1999 (Ur. l. RS št. 60/99 – Official Gazette, No 60/99), the Republic of Slovenia introduced the basic institutional framework for the implementation of the Acquis in the field of regional policy and co-ordination of structural funds. The secondary legislation required for the enforcement of the act will be passed by end February 2000, at the latest.

Following the adoption of the Promotion of Balanced Regional Development Act, the key institutions for structural policy implementation at national level will be the Government Office for European Affairs, the National Agency for Regional Development and the Fund for the Preservation of the Population Density of Slovenian Rural Areas. Structural policy implementing bodies also include some ministries that may launch certain development initiatives.

In line with the principle of partnership with local communities and other development bodies in individual regions, a network of regional development agencies will be gradually set up. Implementation will be supported by technical assistance from Phare under the Special Preparatory Programme for Structural Funds (Ivo Piry, working paper,1999).

Table 1.3 Unemployment rates in working age population, by region, %

Regions	Total		Female		Male		Youth	
	1997	I-VI 1998	1997	I-VI 1998	1997	I-VI 1998	1997	I-VI 1998
Central Slovenia	7.1	7.3	7.0	7.3	7.2	7.3	8.2	7.7
Littoral-Karst	6.9	7.0	8.1	8.2	5.9	5.8	9.1	8.6
Gorenjska	7.7	8.0	8.6	8.9	7.0	7.2	8.5	7.8
Goriška	6.1	6.0	6.6	6.5	5.6	5.5	8.3	7.6
Savinjska	10.7	11.3	11.2	11.9	10.3	10.7	14.6	14.2
Dolenjska	8.4	7.3	8.8	8.1	8.0	6.6	10.0	7.2
Pomurska	11.9	12.5	10.6	10.8	13.0	14.0	18.9	19.0
Karst	7.8	8.2	9.0	9.3	6.8	7.2	10.4	9.7
Podravska	14.5	14.1	14.7	14.6	14.2	13.8	18.9	17.0
Koroška	8.1	8.4	9.1	9.6	7.2	7.4	11.8	10.5
Posavska	10.9	11.2	10.6	11.4	11.1	11.0	15.2	14.3
Zasavska	11.4	12.1	13.4	13.9	9.5	10.4	16.7	16.7
SLOVENIA	9.4	9.5	9.7	9.9	9.2	9.2	12.2	11.4

Sources of data: Employment Service, Statistics Office, calculations by Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development.

A key element in the development of a region is the educational level of its workforce, which makes retraining and training programmes a crucial element of regional and innovative employment policies. Regions and local communities must take into account their advantages in terms of location, their own industrial tradition, the particular qualifications of the local labour force and their own political goals and culture when defining their competitive advantages. In Slovenia, particularly in less developed regions, local partnerships have been established with the participation of trade unions and employers as well as other local social actors. The Employment Service Authority, in co-operation with the SME Promotion Centre, is in charge of infrastructure network development and instruments to establish and promote development partnerships at the local and regional levels. Its purpose is to offer financial and expert assistance to local communities that have a sufficient and self-contained labour market, to organise and use the available expert, financial and other potentials in local community development and to create jobs. This should ensure better co-ordination of all employment programmes at local level and implementation of regional employment programmes (Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Slovenian Economic Mirror 5/99).

1.3 Population

At the end of 1998, Slovenia had 1.98 million inhabitants, of which 51.3% were female. Population density varies considerably from region to region, with an average of 98 inhabitants per km^2. One fifth of the population lives in six cities with over 20,000 inhabitants. As of 31 December 1998, the capital Ljubljana had 324,636 inhabitants and the second biggest town, Maribor, had 148,159 inhabitants (Population, Rapid Reports, April 26 1999/No 112, Statistics Office). The rest of the population lives in nearly 6,000 settlements. Daily commuting to the bigger towns is a regular feature of the socio-economic structure. The dispersion of settlements reflects geographical conditions, historical development and the policy of polycentric development (Report on Human Development 1998, Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development).

According to the last population census carried out in 1991, 87.8% of the population living in Slovenia are Slovenian, 2.8% are Croats, 2.4% Serbs, 1.4% Muslims, 0.4% are Hungarians, 0.2% are Italians and the rest are of other ethnic origins. The official language is Slovenian and, in the regions along the borders with Italy and Hungary, where the Italian and the Hungarian minorities are concentrated, the two other official languages are Italian and Hungarian. The prevailing religious affiliation is Roman Catholic but there are also small Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim and other religious groups (Report 1998, NOS).

Demographically, Slovenia is in a similar situation to other developed European countries and, as in these countries and elsewhere, the demographic transition phase brought about a change in the population replacement rate. In Slovenia, the transition from high to low rates of fertility and mortality, ended some three decades ago. The population has been increasing only very slowly and, in the last few years, it has even decreased (Population, Rapid Reports, September 9 1999/No 232, Statistics Office).

In 1998, the population decreased by 6,589 or 0.33% as a result of a negative natural increase (the natural increase coefficient of – 0.6) and negative net inward migration. The foreign population decreased to 1.69% of the total, which is the lowest since June 1995. At that time there were 2.37% foreigners, mainly temporary refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 1998, the fewest changes were recorded in the number of foreigners with permanent residence in Slovenia, 4,932 persons on 31 December, and in the number of persons under temporary protection, 3,335 persons on 31 December. The number of foreigners with permanent residence did not change owing to harmonised changes in their status. Foreigners who obtained Slovenian citizenship were replaced by the same number of foreigners with temporary residence, as part of the process of becoming foreigners with permanent residence status. The number of persons under temporary protection did not change because they could not return to their homes and therefore stayed in Slovenia. After the decrease at the beginning of the year, the number of citizens, excluding those temporarily living abroad, increased steadily throughout the year to 1.95 million persons on 31 December. The population decrease in 1998, corresponds to the decrease in the number of foreigners with temporary residence in Slovenia: 25,187 persons on 31 December (Population, Rapid Reports, April 26 1999/No 112, Statistics Office).

Table 1.4 Population and citizens by age and gender, Slovenia, December 31, 1998

Age groups	**Population**				**Citizens of the Republic of Slovenia, excluding citizens temporarily residing abroad**	
	Total	**%**	**Men**	**Women**	**Total**	**%**
TOTAL	1,978,334	100.00	963,217	1,015,117	1,944,880	100.00
0-9 years	200,765	10.15	103,185	97,580	198,595	10.21
10-19	272,328	13.77	139,490	132,838	269,572	13.86
20-29	290,413	14.68	148,643	141,770	284,229	14.61
30-39	306,003	15.47	154,138	151,865	296,822	15.26
40-49	311,628	15.75	160,402	151,226	304,588	15.66
50-59	225,822	11.41	111,798	114,024	222,461	11.44
60-69	199,671	10.09	89,581	110,090	19,915	10.18
70-79	127,715	6.46	43,687	84,028	126,912	6.53
80 years and over	43,989	2.22	12,293	31,696	43,786	2.25

Source: Population, Rapid Reports, April 26 1999/No 112, Statistics Office

Although the Slovenian population is quite old, it is not among the oldest in Europe. The ageing of the population has become especially marked during the past decade. In 1998, there was a further ageing from an average age of 38 years in 1997 to 38.3 years in 1998 and the ageing index grew from 77.6 to 81.7, i.e., by 5.3%. In one year the share of the population under 15 decreased from 17% to 16.6%, while the share of the population over 64 increased from 13.2% to 13.6% (Population, Rapid Reports, April 26 1999/No 112, Statistics Office). There is an ever decreasing young population in Slovenia due, mainly, to a significant decrease in fertility combined with almost unchanged mortality and very modest immigration rates. The total fertility rate of 9.0 places Slovenia among the lowest in Europe. Age-specific general fertility rates in recent years show a continued fertility decrease in almost all age groups of mothers and a shift of the most fertile group from 20-24 to 25-29 years of age. The main reasons for the low fertility are: the economic crisis and unemployment; the unavailability of adequate accommodation; the cost of childcare; inflexible working hours; an inappropriate tax policy; and labour market conditions which force women to conclude a work contract which binds them to not to give birth (Report on Human Development 1998, Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development).

The death rate has not changed much in the last two decades. In 1998, the death rate per 1,000 inhabitants reached 9.6. The infant mortality rate was 5.2 per 1,000 live births. Life expectancy at birth continues to increase. A boy born in 1997/98 can expect to live 71.5 years and a girl 78.7 years.

Future population growth will depend on the current age structure of the population and the future fertility rate, death rate and net migration. Mortality rates among the young and middle-aged will probably decrease. Annual fertility indicators will increase in the near future owing to a backlog of deferred pregnancies but still not enough to ensure generational replacement. Immigration flows will be probably replace this shortfall, to some extent (Report on Human Development 1998, Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development).

1.4 *Social protection and social policy*

In its Constitution, Slovenia defines itself as a welfare state. The right to social security is guaranteed, mostly, by way of the health care, pension and disability and other social insurance systems.

1.4.1 *Pension and Disability Insurance Scheme*

The Pension and Disability Insurance Scheme is governed by the Pension and Disability Insurance Act of 1992, with minor amendments in 1994 and 1996, and covers:

- old-age pensions;
- partial old-age pensions;
- early retirement pensions;
- disability pensions;
- survivor's pensions;
- supplementary allowances;
- attendance allowances;
- recreation grants;
- income substitution for disabled workers;
- invalidity grants; and
- maintenance grants.

The new Pension and Disability Insurance Act was adopted at the end of 1999 and came into force on 1 January 2000.

One of the purposes of modifying the pension system was the extension of active life and the postponement of early retirement. The outstanding feature of the pension reform is the choice that future pensioners will have. When the necessary conditions are met, persons will be entitled to retire but it is up to them to decide when they will actually retire. The other main feature of the reform is its gradualist approach, i.e., a gradual increase in the minimum retirement age, full retirement age, pension contributions period etc. When the 20-year transitional period is over, the minimum retirement age for a person who has a full pension-contributions period of 40 years for men and 38 years for women will be 58 years. Where the full retirement age is not reached, the retired person receives a reduced pension. A full pension is received after reaching the full retirement age, which, after the transitional period, will be 61 years for women and 63 years for men. There are specific provisions in the Act which allow a person acquire the right to retirement before the retirement age.

Because of the relative reduction of future pensions as a result of the proposed lower annual accrual rates, insured persons in employment will have the opportunity of buying voluntary additional pension insurance from pension companies or mutual funds. The premiums, up to a certain level, will get favourable tax treatment and they will be equalised with the contributions for compulsory pension insurance on the basis of regular contribution funding (Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Spring report 1999).

1.4.2 *Maternity Leave and Child Benefit Scheme*

The Maternity Leave and Child Benefit Scheme is governed by the Labour Relations Act of 1990, and the Family Benefits Act of 1993, with minor amendments in 1994 and 1995, and covers:

- income substitution;
- parental allowance;
- birth grant;
- children's allowance; and
- care allowance for mentally handicapped and seriously ill children.

The draft Parenthood and Family Earnings Act, which will regulate issues of employment relations during parenthood, is undergoing its second reading. It will adjust family earnings to the changes in the personal income tax system by making new income tax relief the same for all children and will mitigate the negative effects of the implementation of the value-added tax. The novelties of the Act are: paternity leave of 45 days; a special allowance for a large family; adoption leave; and the extension of child-care leave from 260 to 305 days. The essential purpose of the Act is to improve the material standing of families with lower incomes. Child benefits will, therefore, remain selective and the demographic aspect is taken into consideration by making payments progressively higher for each additional child. The existing Act as amended, was already moving in this direction in the field of child benefits and provided for an increase in the eligibility limit for child-care benefit from the previous 18 years to 26 years of age or to the completion of schooling (Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Spring report 1999).

1.4.3 *Unemployment Insurance Scheme*

The Unemployment Insurance Scheme is governed by the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act of 1991, with minor amendments in 1992, 1993 and 1994, and the new Act on Changes and Amendments on the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act of October 1998), which covers:

- unemployment benefits;
- unemployment assistance;
- the right to health, pension and disability insurance in the period of entitlement to unemployment benefits;
- mobility allowance;
- the right to participate in programmes preparing the unemployed for employment; and
- the right of redundant workers to participate in re-employment and retraining programmes.

Amendments to the Employment and Insurance against Unemployment Act redefined the status of the unemployed and the obligations of registered unemployed persons, changing the criteria for those eligible for unemployment benefits as well as the periods during which certain categories of unemployed are eligible for such benefits. A more active approach to seeking employment, including the drawing up of an employment plan for each unemployed person, is expected to reduce the practice of persons remaining unemployed until they are no longer eligible for unemployment benefit (Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, Spring report 1999).

The new law will increase the importance of active employment policy programmes, since all unemployed persons now have the right to join these programmes if that is specified in the employment plan signed by the job counsellor and the unemployed person. On the basis of the new law, active employment policy measures can now be implemented by employers, authorised organisations and labour funds, in addition to the Employment Service and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

The new law has introduced a number of new features in relation to unemployment benefit and assistance. These concern, in particular, eligibility conditions, duration of entitlements, the method of setting benefit levels and of paying agreed benefits. The changes also mean that there is no longer any provision for lump-sum payments or the option of purchasing additional pension years. In these cases the Employment Service can only pay old-age pension contributions.

Unemployed persons may claim unemployment benefit for the period during which they are jobless through no fault of their own. Under the new Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act, this right can be exercised provided that they have unemployment insurance, that they were employed for a period of at least 12 months in the 18 months prior to the termination of employment and that no suitable employment is available.

The new law has extended the duration of the right to unemployment assistance from 6 to 15 months (Employment Service, Annual report 1998).

1.4.4 *Health Care Insurance Scheme*

The Health Care Insurance Scheme is governed by the Health Care and Health Insurance Act of 1992, with minor amendments in 1993. It covers:

- social health care providers and their duties;
- health protection connected with work and the working environment;
- relations between health insurance and health institutes; and
- processing of social insurance claims.

Under the law, the Health Care Insurance Scheme is responsible for providing: the entire system of social, collective and individual services for health improvement; prophylactics; prompt medical treatment; and nursing and rehabilitation services for the sick and injured. In addition, it also covers rights to health insurance, by which social security payments in case of illness, injury, childbirth or death is guaranteed.

1.4.5 *Social Assistance Scheme with cash benefits*

The Social Assistance Scheme with cash benefits is governed by the Social Protection Act of 1992, with minor amendments in 1994. It covers:

- prevention and amelioration of social problems of individuals and families;
- cash assistance;
- cash allowances; and
- emergency assistance for individuals living below subsistence levels.

1.4.6 *The National Study Grants and Scholarships Scheme*

The scholarship system, which has been regulated by the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act and the Rules on Scholarships for a number of years now, is constantly being upgraded. The new law introduced student loans as an addition to company, national and Zois scholarships. The loans will be issued by lenders chosen following a public tender. The state will issue guarantees and will subsidise the interest rates (Employment Service, Annual report 1998).

1.5 *Labour market*

1.5.1 *Introduction*

The greatest fall in employment and increase in unemployment was recorded in the period 1987 to 1993. At the same time, owing to the large number of redundant workers going on early retirement, the numbers of the non-active population also started to grow. Even with increased economic growth after 1993, unemployment continued at a relatively high level and the number of long-term unemployed, in particular, increased. In 1997 and 1998, however, there was a halt to the decline in the numbers in employment and in the active labour force.

The number of registered unemployed persons increased from 1.6% in 1987 to 15.5% in December 1993 but according to the internationally comparable Labour Force Survey data the picture was slightly better. In recent years, the survey-based unemployment rate ranged between 7 and 8%. It is evident that, since renewed economic growth has lowered only the survey-based unemployment rate, informal employment has increased. Competition on the world market and relatively low cost of investment in technological modernisation are forcing enterprises to reduce costs and increase the quality of their products. This demands a smaller but better educated labour force and means that additional employment is dependent primarily on the expansion of demand.

There is an ever increasing employment opportunity gap between different regions and between different categories of the unemployed. Vulnerable groups include, in particular, those who are "less attractive" to employers: older unemployed persons, first-time job-seekers, unemployed persons without professional education, women, the disabled and the long-term unemployed.

Slovenia has been facing enormous structural unemployment problems, which have worsened year by year. Apart from young people without suitable work experience, there are also many older persons who lost their jobs as a result of company restructuring and downsizing. Very often their vocational qualifications do not match the requirements of the jobs which exist.

A significant cause of structural unemployment in certain regions is the low mobility of the Slovenian labour force. Although there has also been economic growth, in recent years, in the regions outside the metropolitan area, there are still pronounced differences in job opportunities in specific regions. The transition process has particularly affected the larger urban centres with traditional industrial production. These areas did not manage to complete the economic recovery phase.

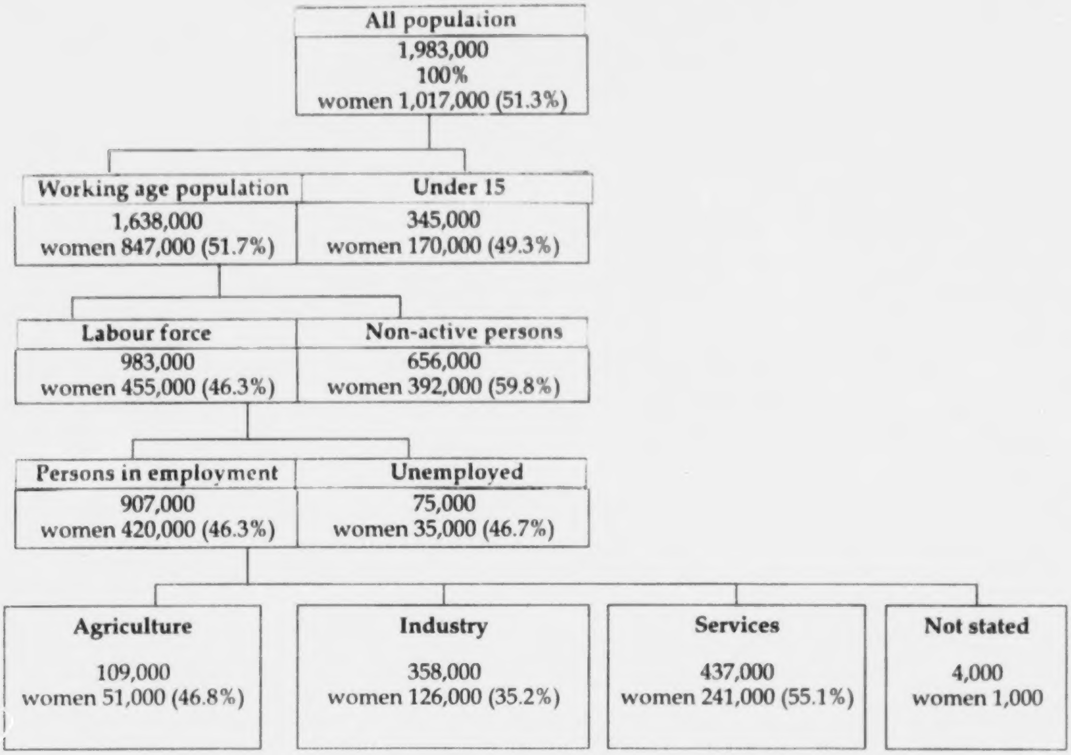
As with other socialist countries, Slovenia used to have a high female employment rate but, in the first years of transition, the number of employed women significantly decreased due to early retirement, in particular. The position of women on the labour market has worsened in recent years and Labour Force Survey data show that the unemployment rate of women exceeds that of men.

A recent report prepared by a World Bank team (World Bank, 1999) analysed economic development in Slovenia in recent years and identified certain policy options linked to Slovenia's ambition of European Union membership. The following are their recommendations concerning labour market issues.

- Active labour market policies should be designed and targeted to address the difficulties and complexity of structural unemployment, which is created by the mismatch between the supply and demand for labour skills. People who lost their jobs due to enterprises restructuring are trapped outside the formal economy because new market conditions demand higher degrees of education and skill. Also, passive policies should recognise the need to support higher levels of this structural unemployment, as the transition advances.
- In the area of labour legislation, the government needs to focus on policies that encourage a more flexible labour market, on the grounds that countries with high employment-protection standards appear to have higher rates of long-term unemployment as well as higher rates of unemployment among young persons relative to adults. The World Bank experts argue that, as small and medium-sized firms represent the engine of employment growth, it would be highly undesirable to hinder their expansion. Furthermore, they argue that, since most European Union countries are currently expanding the scope of decentralised wage bargaining and linking wage-setting to firm performance, Slovenia should consider doing the same.
- Slovenia's acceptance of the Acquis communautaire implies recognition both of a set of minimum rights for workers as well as standardised labour conditions similar to those prevailing in the European Union. The European Union White Paper identified four areas of **social legislation** linked to the labour market, where legal **harmonisation and convergence** is needed. These are:
  - equal opportunity for men and women;
  - health and safety at work;
  - labour law and working conditions; and
  - co-ordination of social security schemes.
- To make **social policies** fiscally sustainable and to reduce the perverse incentives they may generate in labour markets, **efficient targeting and design** will be critical.
- The free movement of workers, stipulated under European Union single market legislation, will require changes in national laws prior to full European Union membership and, in particular, that Slovenia must remove restrictions on foreign employment.
- They also argue that compliance with some European Union regulations could increase labour costs and adversely affect labour demand and enterprise competitiveness. Implementing such regulations will require the setting up of means to monitor compliance by firms and to ensure workers can exercise their rights.
- Finally, they suggest that, as the fiscal situation permits, there should be efforts to reduce taxes on labour. They identify, in particular, the tax on wages and contributions for pensions, sickness and employment insurance. High taxes on labour are not only harmful to job creation but may also encourage tax evasion. If taxes are too high, fewer small firms will be established, wages will tend to be underreported and the size of the informal sector will tend to increase.
- Overall, the World Bank team concludes, in the run-up to accession, Slovenia must seize the opportunity to make its labour market more efficient.

1.5.2 Labour force

Chart 1.3 Main features of the population in Slovenia according to the Labour Force Survey 2/1998


All population
1,983,000
100%
women 1,017,000 (51.3%)
Working age population
1,638,000
women 847,000 (51.7%)
Under 15
345,000
women 170,000 (49.3%)
Labour force
983,000
women 455,000 (46.3%)
Non-active persons
656,000
women 392,000 (59.8%)
Persons in employment
907,000
women 420,000 (46.3%)
Unemployed
75,000
women 35,000 (46.7%)
Agriculture
109,000
women 51,000 (46.8%)
Industry
358,000
women 126,000 (35.2%)
Services
437,000
women 241,000 (55.1%)
Not stated
4,000
women 1,000

Source: Rapid Reports, No. 249, 24 September, 1998, Statistics Office.

Due to social, demographic and economic changes, the structure of the labour force has also changed significantly. The most obvious feature is the ageing of the population which, not only increases the problem of financing the existing system of social security but also emphasises the need for lifelong learning and a more flexible education system.

The process of adapting the Slovenian economy to the new markets and new ownership relations reduced, considerably, the number employed and the breadth of the labour force. In the ten-year period from 1987, the labour force decreased by 11%, approximately.

In 1998, Slovenia had nearly two million inhabitants, of whom a total of 1.64 million were of working age, i.e., aged between 15 and 65. According to the Labour Force Survey during the second quarter of the year, the labour force amounted to 983,000, and 656,000 persons were non-active. The Labour Force Survey also showed that there were 907,000 people in employment and 75,000 unemployed persons, 92.3% and 7.6%, respectively.

In 1998, there were 137,000 fifteen to twenty-four year old persons employed in Slovenia, which represented a decline from 14.9% of the total labour force in 1997 to 13.9% in 1998.

Activity rate

The activity rate, i.e., the labour force as a proportion of the working age population, is lower than elsewhere in the European Union and is attributable, in particular, to lower activity rates in the 50-and-over age group.

Table 1.5 Activity rates by age group, Slovenia, 1993-1998

Activity rates	Total					
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
	May	May	May	May	Q2	Q2
15 and m.	57.8	57.6	59.7	57.6	59.1	60.0
15-64	68.0	67.8	69.3	68.0	70.1	71.0
15-24	41.6	39.5	41.7	38.0	47.6	45.3
25-49	92.2	91.7	92.6	91.8	90.4	91.5
50-64	34.7	36.5	37.4	37.5	36.8	39.1
65+	5.4	7.9	7.0	6.6	8.3	10.3

Source: Labour Force Survey data, 1993-1998, Statistics Office.

Labour Force Survey criteria regard the labour force as including retired people, students and other persons who, during the period of observation, performed some work for payment or for profit. Accordingly, the active population consists of employed, self-employed and unemployed persons.

As mentioned earlier, the socio-demographic developments also caused changes in the structure of the labour force. The labour force activity rate for men increased from 65.7% in 1997 to 66.6% in 1998 and was the main contributor to the increase in the overall participation rate from 59.1% in 1997 to 60.0% in 1998. The increase of the overall participation rate was also attributable to the ageing population and the raised retirement age.

From the Labour Force Survey it is possible to obtain a sample assessment of the age composition of the labour force. As the table above shows, the increased participation rate occurred mostly in the 52-64 age group and among males, in particular. The participation rate among the 15-24 age group is more susceptible to economic cycles, with peaks in 1995 and again in 1997, followed by a decline in 1998.

The changed economic situation has prevented a number of persons from entering and remaining in the labour force, whereas the growing necessity for an income has motivated many people to remain in the labour force.

The Labour Force Survey activity rates are much more stable and, at the same time, show the strong influence of various types of non-formal employment. The registered activity rate has fallen but the survey-based rate has increased which indicates a high level of non-formal employment among young people. According to both measures, the discrepancy in the activity rate for people aged 50 and over also indicates a high level of non-formal employment in this age group.

In 1998, according to Labour Force Survey criteria, 45.3% of young people aged between 15 and 24 were active. This represents a decline of 0.8% compared to 1997 but if we compare 1998 with 1993, it is evident that there are many more young people on the labour market. The activity rate in this period increased by 3.7%.

Employment/population rate

The employment/population rate, a simple ratio of employed persons to working age population, is another useful indicator of changes in the labour market.

The employment/population rate in Slovenia is lower than in European Union countries. The rate is high in the middle-age group and low among older persons. This results in lower total activity and employment/population rates and is mainly attributable to early retirements in the past.

Table 1.6 Employment rates by age group, Slovenia, 1993-1998

Employment rates	Total					
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
	May	May	May	May	Q2	Q2
15 and m.	52.5	52.4	55.3	53.4	54.9	55.4
15-64	60.7	60.3	62.9	61.9	63.4	63.7
15-24	31.5	30.7	33.8	30.9	39.3	37.0
25-49	85.5	84.8	87.0	86.4	85.1	85.6
50-64	33.1	34.4	35.8	36.1	35.7	37.4
65 and m.	5.3	7.7	7.0	6.0	8.3	10.3

Source: Data from the Labour Force Survey, 1993-1998, Statistics Office.

The employment/population rate has, in general, been rising in recent years although there was an exceptional overall decline in 1996.

Labour Force Survey data for 1998 show that the employment/population rate rose to 55.4% from 54.9% in 1997, attributable, mostly, to an increase in employment in the service sector.

In 1998 the employment/population rate for young people was 36.9%, a 1.1% increase on 1997. Compared to 1993, the employment ratio rose by 5.4%.

Unemployment rate

The labour force has grown by 1.8% since 1997, which, combined with lower employment/ population growth, generated an unemployment rate of 7.7%, in 1998. In 1998, the Labour Force Survey unemployment rate for the under-25s remained at about twice the rate of those aged over 25. The youth unemployment rate in the second quarter of 1998 was 18.2% but, although this is quite high, it should be noted that this represented a fall from 24.2% in 1993.

Youth unemployment in Slovenia is lower than the average rate in European Union countries. This is due to the overall employment level and the education and training system. The dual system of education is expected to further reduce youth unemployment in Slovenia in the future, because, during the period of apprenticeship, apprentices will be classified as employees.

1.5.3 *Number of persons in employment*

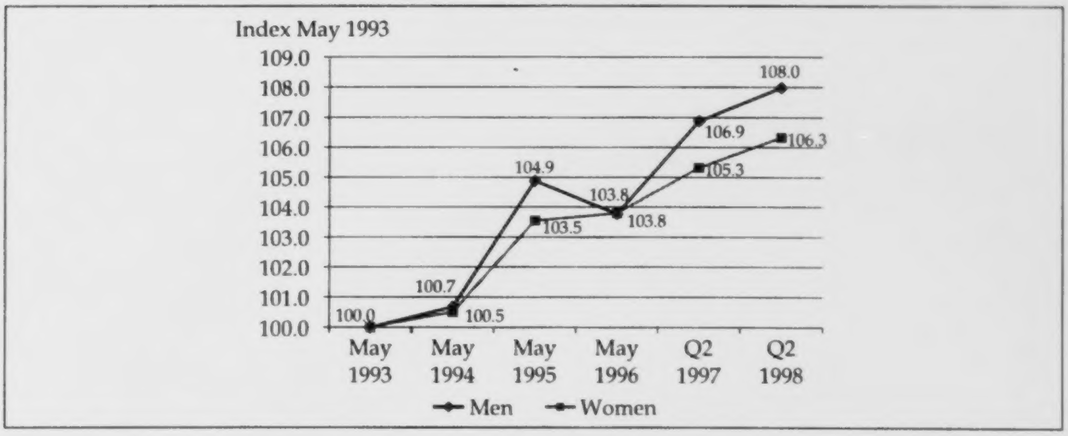
When the economic situation deteriorated rapidly, the number of vacancies was reduced and the number of persons in employment fell. At the same time, the number of persons out of the labour force and of unemployed persons started to increase. The lower numbers in employment were mainly the result of reduced employment in industry, which was severely affected by an economic crisis and the related economic restructuring.

In 1998, employment increased by 9,000, a 1.0% increase on the previous year and similar to that seen in 1994. In all other years, there was more than 1% annual growth. In spite of the fact that part-time employment grew faster in recent years than fixed-term employment, there was a 6.8% fall in part-time employment in 1998. The employment increase occurred mainly in the 25 to 49 age group, which represents two thirds of all persons in employment. When compared to the same period in 1997, employment for the fourth quarter of 1998 increased by 0.9%.

Broken down by employment status, in 1998, 80.8% of the employed labour force were employees, 12.5% were self-employed and 6.7% were 'family-helpers'. 58% of those in employment were women.

Employment by gender

Chart 1.4 Persons in employment by gender, Slovenia, 1993-1998



Source: Labour Force Survey data, 1993-1998, Statistics Office.

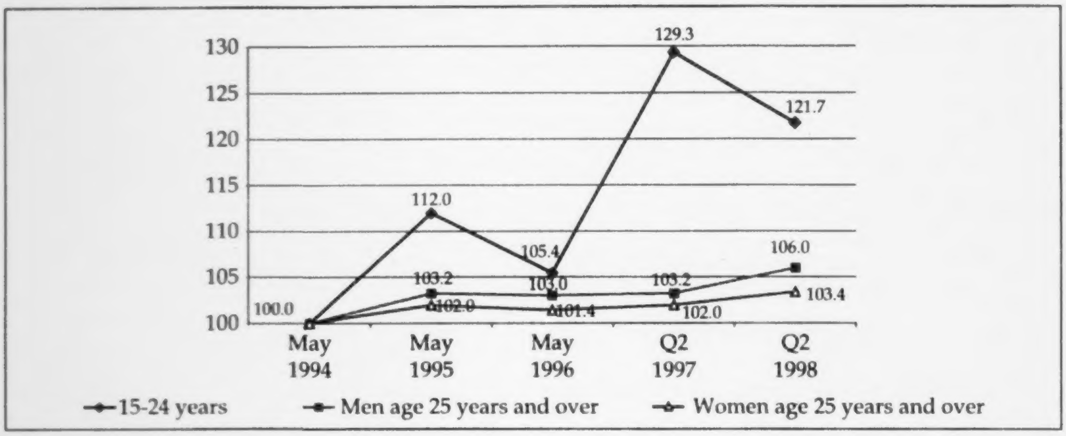
As the above Chart describes, the male employment growth rate exceeded that of women during the last two years and, while employment levels increased most years, the male employment rate decreased in 1996. Since May 1993, the number of women in employment has increased by less than 25,000, 3.6%, compared to an increase of 63,000, 8.0%, for men.

As indicated earlier, the overall employment rate rose by 1% in 1998. The employment rate for men rose from 61.1% in 1997 to 61.6% in 1998, whereas the employment rate for women rose from 49.1% in 1997 to 49.5% in 1998.

Employment by age group

In Chart 1.5, the total number of persons in employment are indexed from a base of 100 in May 1994. The number in employment aged 25 and over recovered slightly after a decline in 1996. The number of young persons in employment peaked in 1995 and 1997.

Chart 1.5 Persons in employment by age group, 1994-1998 (indexed May 1994)



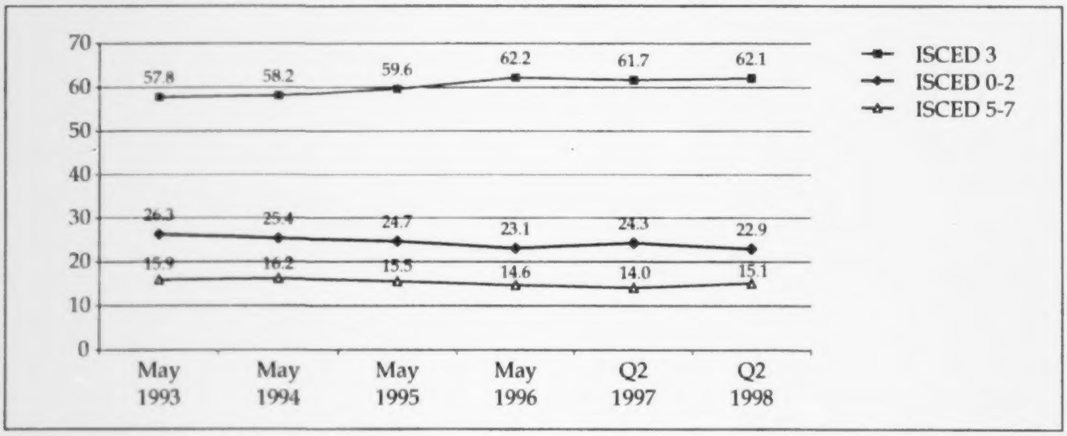
Source: Labour Force Survey data, 1994-1998, Statistics Office.

In recent years, the numbers of men and women aged over 25 in employment has increased considerably. In 1998, the number of 15 to 24 year olds in employment declined by 7,000 compared to 1997 and the number of adult men and women increased by 11,000 and 5,000, respectively. However, despite the decreased numbers of young people in employment in 1998, youth employment remains well above the levels of two years before.

Employment by educational attainment

Chart 1.6 shows that almost three quarters of persons in employment had attained, at least, the education level corresponding to ISCED 3.

Chart 1.6 The structure of employment by educational attainment, ISCED categories, Slovenia, 1993-1998

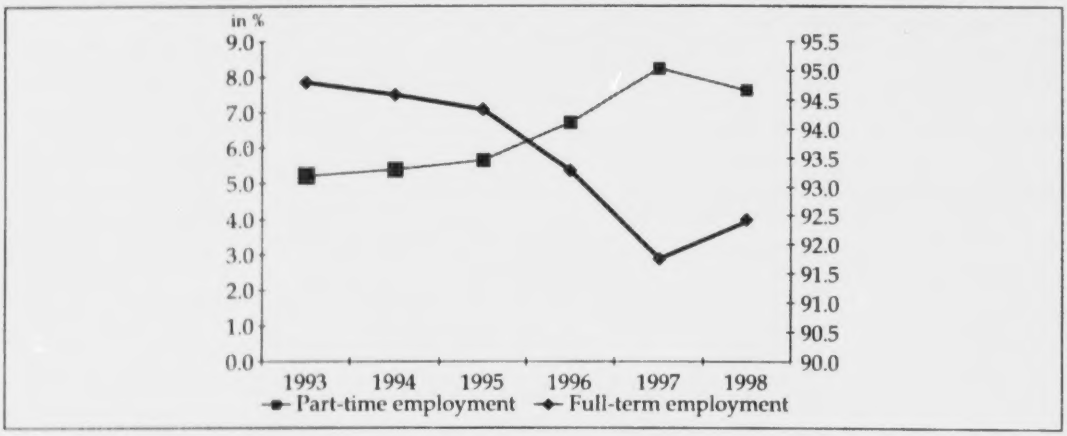


Source: Labour Force Survey data, 1993-1998, Statistics Office.

In 1998, 30.3% of persons in employment had attained the education level corresponding to the two- or three-year upper secondary school - an increase of 3.1% compared to the previous year. Following the ISCED classification, the structure of persons in employment in the second quarter of 1998 was as follows: 62.1% of persons in employment reached ISCED 3; 22.9% reached ISCED 0-2; and 15.1% of persons reached ISCED 5-7.

Persons in full and part-time employment

Chart 1.7 Share of the persons in full and part-time employment, Slovenia, 1998

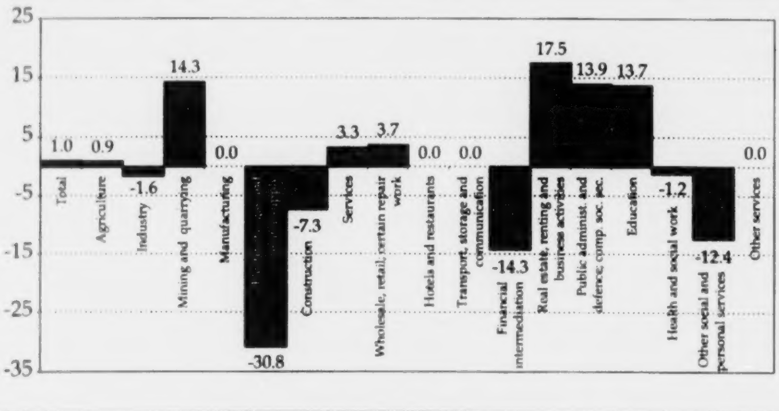


Source: Labour Force Survey data 1998, Statistics Office.

Chart 1.7 shows the pattern of part-time and full-time employment over the period 1993-1998. In 1998, there was a slight improvement in the relative position of full-time employment as the numbers with full-time contracts increased from 91.8% to 92.4%. Part-time employment is rare in Slovenia and, although there has been an increase in recent years, the percentage fell in 1998, from 8.2% to 7.6%. In 1998, also, the numbers of women in part-time employment declined by 5,000 persons, or 11.9%.

Persons in employment by sector of activity

Chart 1.8 Persons in employment by activity, index 2nd quarter 1998/1997



Source: Rapid Reports, No. 249, 24 September 1998, Statistics Office.

The share of persons employed in both the agriculture and industry sectors is decreasing, while the share employed in services is increasing. In the past few years, according to the Labour Force Survey data, the share of the agriculture sector fell from 15 to 12%, and that of the industry sector from 45 to 41%. Although the sectoral changes were influenced by the transition crisis during the 1990s, they are also regarded as a western European development trend and, by this criterion, Slovenia is moving closer to these countries.

Problems occurred when workers in industry lost their jobs and had few opportunities of finding others within the same sector. The jobs in services are less suitable since different types of qualifications and work experience are needed. Besides, employers in the service sector have additional requirements, such as flexible working hours etc.

In 1998, nearly 50% of persons in employment were employed in the service sector, an increase of 3.3% on the previous year. Only slight changes were noticed in the agriculture sector. In 1998, the numbers employed in industry declined, due, mainly, to the increase in the service sector. In 1982, the numbers in employment by sector were: agriculture, 12%; industry, 39.4%; and services, 48.2%.

1.5.4 *Labour market supply and demand*

Economic growth and the unchanged conditions in the goods and services market meant that demand for labour increased only slightly in 1998. In 1998, employers registered a requirement for 142,636 workers and trainees with the Employment Service, a 6.6% increase on 1997. Although labour demand has been quite high in recent years, approximately two thirds of the jobs on offer were of a temporary nature and limited, on average, to 7-8 months duration. This means that the same vacancies were advertised several times in one year. Employers have became cautious in offering employment on a permanent basis and, instead, employ people for a temporary period. In this way, they can avoid legislative restrictions on the dismissal or replacement of workers.

A comparison between the structure of demand, by branch, in 1997 and 1998, shows a fall in demand for workers in agriculture and a growing demand in the non-agricultural and service sector. The biggest increase in demand, 19.5%, was recorded in healthcare and social security, while demand in the processing industry went up by 9.1%.

The share of demand for less educated workers is decreasing and is increasing for the more educated. Also, the discrepancy between the supply and the demand is greatest for these two categories. Even though the need for workers who have attained the first and second levels of education increased in the 1990s, employment opportunities for people with low qualifications remain slim. Demand at the lowest levels is primarily attributable to the revitalisation of the construction sector. Discrepancies between supply and demand are often territorially based, as people are not prepared to move from their native towns.

The education structure of demand changed very little in 1998, over the previous year. Most employers, when seeking new staff, no longer simply ask for appropriate education as a condition of employment but also expect additional skills such as computer literacy, ability to speak a foreign language, a driving licence etc. They also prefer younger and more adaptable workers and give priority to those who have been unemployed for a shorter time and who have attained higher levels of education.

The education structure of registered vacancies, in 1998, was as follows: for workers who have attained first and second levels of education, 32.5%; third and fourth levels, 34.8%; fifth level, 17.5%; and sixth and seventh levels, 15.2%. In comparison with 1997, demand was higher for the third and fourth levels and lower for the fifth, whereas, for others it remained stable.

1.5.5 *Unemployment*

After a huge increase in registered unemployment between 1988 and 1993, due to the social and economic crisis, when it grew from 21,342 to 129,087, the rate of registered unemployment has stabilised in the recent years. In the transition from the planned to a market economy, employment was much less secure and, since economically weak enterprises were no longer so protected, many went bankrupt. Moreover, in the second half of the 1990s, the revitalisation of the economy was not accompanied by a significant increase in employment.

In recent years, economic growth has had much more influence on the productivity rate than the employment rate so that the numbers of unemployed have been decreasing quite slowly. Consequently, the registered unemployment rate rose steadily from 2.2% and reached 14.5% in 1998. There is, increasingly, a seasonal variation in registered unemployment, with numbers lower in the first part of the year, due, in part, to an influx of school graduates onto the labour market later in the year.

Unemployment increased considerably in the 1990s and marginal groups, such as older persons, the less qualified, the disabled, women and young persons were the most affected.

Economic growth does not, of itself, prevent unemployment, so much more emphasis is put on the promotion of employment measures and other employment policies.

Differences between the survey-based and registered unemployment

The labour market is monitored through the sample-based Labour Force Survey carried out by the Statistics Office and the data collected by the Employment Service . The Employment Service data are based on the register and are, normally, extracted on the last day of the month, while the Labour Force Survey is carried out quarterly, based on a sample period of 15 days of a selected month.

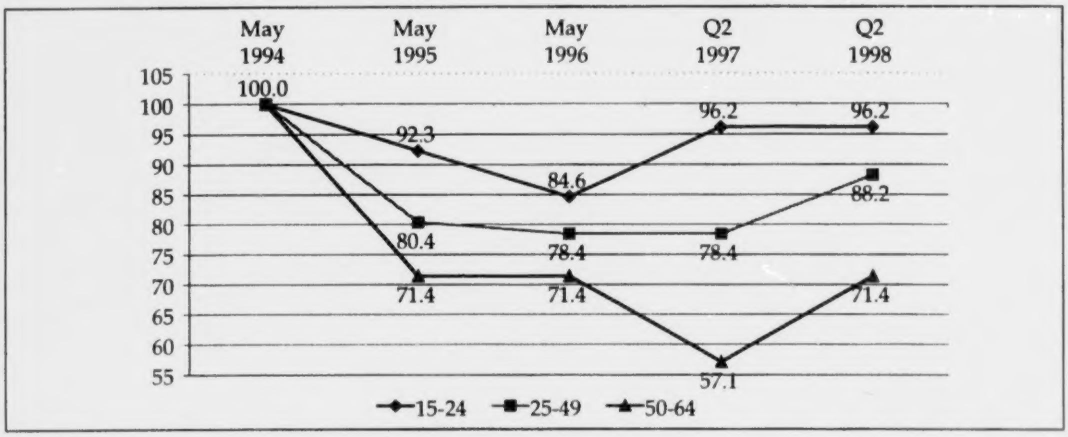
The Labour Force Survey follows the recommendations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the standards and practices of the European Union Statistics Office (EUROSTAT). The Employment Service data are extracted in compliance with national legislation and administrative regulations.

The Labour Force Survey and the Employment Service apply different definitions of an unemployed person and what constitutes an active job search. For this reason, the number of unemployed active job seekers registered with the Employment Service does not correspond to the number of unemployed persons based on the International Labour Organisation recommendations. The differences between registered unemployment and survey-based unemployment have remained essentially the same over the years. Unemployed persons who have neither registered with the Employment Office within four weeks of becoming unemployed nor actively sought employment in any other way, are generally classified in the Labour Force Survey as belonging to disguised unemployment. However, persons registered with the Employment Service are not necessarily classified as unemployed in the Survey if, for example, they do not meet the criteria determined by the International Labour Organisation.

In the Survey, persons who would accept a job but are not actively seeking one are classified as belonging to disguised unemployment. The Labour Force Survey divides disguised unemployment into two categories: discouraged job seekers, i.e., not seeking work because they do not think they would find any, and persons who do not seek work because of studies, childcare or some other reason, although they would be prepared to accept a job offer. However, in accordance with the International Labour Organisation definition, all persons in disguised unemployment are classified as in the labour force.

Unemployment by gender

Chart 1.9 *Unemployment rates by gender, Slovenia, 1993-1998*



Source: Labour Force Survey data, 1994-1998, Statistics Office.

The structure by gender has been influenced by various factors, including:

- long periods of absence of women from work, due to pregnancy and for health reasons, influence employers to prefer – among equally qualified persons – a man to a woman;
- because women can retire earlier than men, there are fewer unemployed women in the higher age group; and
- frequently, if a woman cannot find a job for a long time, she often stays in the home or starts a family and thus leaves the labour market.

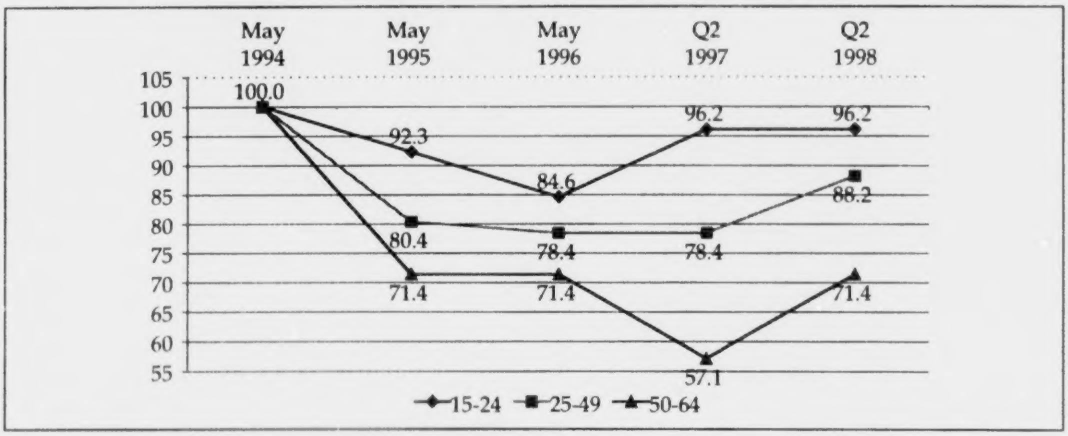
The rise in unemployment in 1998 affected women much more than men and, while the rate of unemployment for men is lower than the total unemployment rate, the rate for women is the same as the total unemployment rate.

Due to the crisis in the heavy manufacturing sector, which, mainly, employs men, the share of women among the total registered unemployed gradually dropped from nearly 50% to around 44% in 1993. The share of female unemployment began to increase again in 1994 and reached 50% in 1998, largely, as a consequence of the crisis in the textile and footwear industries, which were hit several years after the other sectors. The rehabilitation and restructuring of companies in these sectors are expected to halt the upward trend of female unemployment.

Compared to registered unemployment, the survey-based unemployment data shows a more favourable position for women on the labour market, until 1996. Until then, women were less affected by transitional changes than men. However, in the second quarter of 1997 the conditions changed and the survey-based unemployment rate for women exceeded the one for men by 0.2%.

Unemployment by age group

Chart 1.10 Unemployment by age group, Slovenia, 1994-1998



Source: Labour Force Survey data, 1994-1998, Statistics Office.

The age structure of the unemployed changed drastically in the 1990s, mainly due to the fact that most of the workers made redundant were older and poorly educated. This group has fewer employment opportunities, since employers give preference to younger, better educated people. Consequently, at the end of 1998, the share of those aged 40 or over was 47% and the share of those aged over 50 was 22% of total unemployment. Between 1993 and 1998, the share of unemployed persons aged between 40 and 50 increased by 24% and those aged over 50 by 109%. In lower age groups unemployment fell in the same period, and in the 15-18 age group, in particular, it decreased by 62%.

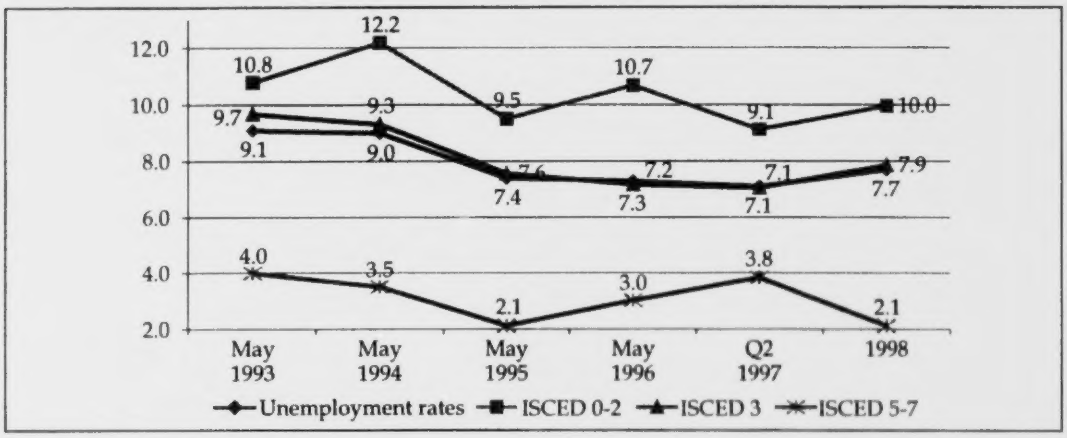
The age structure of the survey-based unemployment data differs only slightly from the registered one. Younger persons have a higher share and older persons a lower share, largely, because persons aged over 50 are less active in searching for employment than young people.

Nevertheless, young people remain the least protected category of the labour force, because, on the one hand, they lack experience and, on the other, they tend to be more accepting of part-time and temporary work because they are more flexible and relatively less demanding.

Unemployment by education

In circumstances of steadily increasing unemployment, Slovenia faced a similar situation to other more developed countries, in that, initially, the less educated were the most affected but as the crisis continued, employment opportunities decreased for the more educated as well. However, the largest and most problematic group from the point of view of employment opportunities remains those with no or obsolete qualifications, who are, also, usually, long-term unemployed. Their labour market prospects depend on further vocational training. The combination of inadequate qualifications and long-term unemployment means that this group risks becoming increasingly marginalised and, without additional motivation and help, their integration into the world of work and society will become less and less realistic.

Chart 1.11 Unemployment rates by educational attainment, Slovenia, 1993-1998



Source: Labour Force Survey data, 1993-1998, Statistics Office.

The most important integration mechanisms for the unemployed with inadequate qualifications are active employment policy measures which aim to provide them with education and training and, thus, make them more competitive on the labour market.

Changes in the educational profile of the unemployed are linked to the fact that all education levels have encountered a rapid absolute growth in unemployment. However, of the total number of registered unemployed, the proportion of those with the first or second level of education has remained at 47%. Between 1993 and 1998, the growth in unemployment of those with the lowest levels of education was 1%. In the same period, all other groups registered a decline in the proportion of those unemployed, the greatest decline, 14.3%, being in the group with university education.

The educational profile of survey-based unemployment is very similar to that for registered unemployment, except in the case of the lowest educational level, who are less active in seeking a job, which could be because most of the lower educated persons are relatively old.

The ever increasing share of young people continuing their education after primary school influences the educational profile of first-time job seekers and, consequently, the educational profile of all young unemployed persons. Compared to other groups of unemployed, the share of young unemployed with completed secondary school education has increased in recent years mainly because the number joining this age group is greater than the number leaving it.

Long-term unemployment

The long-term unemployed are a specific category of the unemployed which needs intensive help in order to be gradually integrated into the labour market.

The longer an individual is registered as unemployed with the Employment Service, the greater is the risk of social exclusion. The participation of long-term unemployed people in various programmes of education and training has become an increasingly important measure for their social integration.

Table 1.7 Unemployment by duration of unemployment, Slovenia, 1993-1998

Employment rates	Total					
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
	May	May	May	May	Q2	Q2
Less than 1 month	8.2	4.7	5.7	4.3	5.8	2.7
1-5 months	20.0	18.8	24.3	24.6	21.7	21.3
6-11 months	15.3	16.5	14.3	18.8	17.4	18.7
12-23 months	20.0	20.0	17.1	18.8	21.7	18.7
24 and more	34.1	36.5	35.7	33.3	33.3	37.3
Long-term unemployed*	**54.1**	**56.5**	**52.9**	**52.2**	**55.1**	**56.0**
Total unemployed persons	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* *Long-term unemployed equals the sum of those unemployed for 12-23 months plus those unemployed for 24 months and more, i.e., the previous two columns.*

Source: Labour Force Survey data, 1993-1998, Statistics Office.

The fact that the influx into unemployment is higher than the outflow influences the structure and duration of unemployment. The share of persons who are unemployed for over a year has been steadily increasing and the number of the long-term unemployed is almost twice as high as in the 1980s. The proportion of the long-term unemployed who are totally unemployed, has been rising since 1996. In 1998, those out of work for a year or more accounted for 56.0% of the total survey-based unemployed. Moreover, 37.3% of the unemployed have been out of work for two years or more. Generally speaking, the situation in 1998 is an improvement on that in 1994, when the long-term unemployment rate was at its peak but, nonetheless, it remains a serious problem.

Employment opportunities for elderly and poorly educated persons have decreased, which has led to longer waiting periods for employment. The share of registered long-term unemployed persons moved gradually up to 60% of the total registered unemployed, in the 1990s. Since 1993, the number of registered long-term unemployed has been increasing, in particular, those who have been unemployed for over three years, which supports the argument that there is an inverse ratio between employability and the duration of waiting for a job.

The unemployed with lower levels of education and over 40 represent the largest single group of long-term unemployed with very poor employment opportunities. Long-term unemployment reduces an individual's employment opportunities and, at the same time, makes them less active in seeking a job. In fact, the high proportion of long-term unemployed has become one of the factors that exacerbate the structural imbalance between labour market supply and demand. The seriousness of the problem of long-term unemployment is evident, therefore, from both the survey-based data and the registered data on unemployment.

1.5.6 *Active employment policies*

In a modern society, active employment policies are crucial to helping overcome labour market discrepancies. Employment policies include a wide range of measures and programmes designed to decrease the scope of unemployment, address the needs of specific target groups and reach a greater harmonisation between labour supply and demand. Active employment measures address the consequences of economic, demographic, cultural and social changes that influence the labour market. In the context of major economic and social changes, the government is also encouraged to influence, by means of targeted measures, the labour market itself.

The main goals of employment policy are as follows:

- to increase the employability of individuals and, thus, improve their competitiveness on the labour market;
- to help people socially reintegrate, which often requires the creation of 'social employment' within specific programmes;
- to improve the employment opportunities of marginalised groups and, thus, contribute to social cohesion and a stabilisation of employment during a recession; and
- to prevent labour shortages in times of economic upswing.

Employment policy includes a combination of active and passive employment measures, both of which are managed by the Employment Service. The Employment Service is a public agency reporting to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. The Ministry has the overall responsibility for decisions on employment policy measures and it sets guidelines for the implementation of employment programmes, while the Employment Service is responsible for the implementation of measures and programmes at national, regional and local levels.

Deteriorating labour market conditions have required an increase of funding from the state budget for the implementation of employment policy programmes. However, when compared to European Union countries, the share of GDP earmarked for employment policy, only 0.3% in 1997, is still low.

1.5.6.1 *Passive measures*

Unemployment Benefit and Assistance as well as health, pension and disability insurance paid whilst receiving unemployment benefit, are regarded as passive employment measures.

The new Act on Changes and Amendments to Employment and Unemployment Insurance, which came into effect in October 1998, has introduced some new conditions regarding the entitlement, duration of entitlement, method of calculation and the mode of payment of unemployment benefit and Assistance.

A person is entitled to receive unemployment benefit if he or she has been insured against unemployment for at least 12 months over a total period of 18 months prior to unemployment, provided there is no other appropriate job available at the time of applying. There is no entitlement to unemployment benefit in the case of voluntary termination of an employment contract.

The unemployed whose right to unemployment benefit has expired and young unemployed trainees who have worked for less than 12 months are entitled to apply for means-tested unemployment assistance. To be eligible, the income of the unemployed and her/his family members may not exceed 80% of the guaranteed minimum income per person.

In 1998, 37,734 persons, on average, received unemployment benefit, an increase of 3.1% on 1997. Also in 1998, 6,972 persons claimed unemployment assistance, most after the end of their unemployment benefit and 1,481 after the end of their trainee period. On average, the Employment Service paid monthly unemployment assistance to 3,331 unemployed people.

1.5.6.2 *Active measures*

Active employment policy measures are primarily intended for the unemployed and workers about to be made redundant. The main objectives of active employment policy programmes are:

- to enhance the competitive position of the unemployed on the labour market and, thus, reduce unemployment;
- to provide employers with a qualified work force;
- to maintain the work skills and abilities of the unemployed;
- to encourage active job searching;
- to increase the responsibility of unemployed people for their own employment and professional development;
- to alleviate the psychological and social effects of unemployment;
- to reduce expenditure on social welfare and to redirect these funds from passive to active forms of expenditure;
- to reduce the black economy; and
- to establish even closer co-operation with local communities.

Table 1.8 Participants in employment programmes 1993–1998

Programmes	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Education and training	12,000	9,900	15,270	10,768	16,456	18,167	15,017	29,227	126,805
Joint funding of trainees	7,200	9,300	13,117	8,423	5,011	2,230	64	–	45,345
Subsidising new jobs	3,308	9,822	–	–	–	–	–	987	14,117
Lump-sum UB payments	3,468	1,143	2,183	1,208	1,176	881	562	17	10,638
Self-employment	210	833	2,210	3,283	3,211	2,310	1,590	1,630	15,277
Public works	1,248	3,513	4,367	4,475	4,272	4,728	5,354	10,641	38,598
Training for the disabled	362	424	732	867	1,339	1,453	1,088	1,182	7,447
Joint funding for the disabled	–	–	120	156	181	99	115	57	728
Medical service	–	–	–	1,470	1,689	1,965	2,382	2,742	10,248
Subsidies to sheltered workshops	–	–	–	2,500	3,100	3,530	4,036	4,895	18,061
Joint funding of redundant workers:									
■ Project 11	–	–	–	–	–	–	6,618	10,299	16,917
■ retraining	16,838	8,396	10,285	2,780	2,250	2,086	1,596	1,127	45,358
■ settlements	4,566	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4,566
■ purchase of insurance period	6,554	4,689	2,067	–	–	–	–	–	13,310
■ training of workers taken from other companies	236	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	236

Programmes	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Refunding of contributions to employers under Art. 48a	–	–	–	906	2,724	1,596	1,178	1,172	7,576
Refunding of contributions to employers under the Conditions for Refunding Act	–	–	–	359	520	799	667	717	3,062
Labour funds	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1,473	1,473
Total no. of participants in employment programmes	55,990	48,020	50,341	37,185	41,929	39,844	40,267	66,166	252,957

Source: Annual Report 1998, Employment Service

In the context of the active employment policy, various measures, programmes and activities are carried out, some in close co-operation with various external institutions. The most important of these programmes and measures are listed below.

Education and training programmes

Education and training programmes for the unemployed are the most important instruments for regulating labour market supply and have become an increasingly efficient measure of social reintegration for those who have been more or less marginalised from the mainstream labour market.

Education and training programmes constitute the largest part of the active employment policy programmes. There were 126,805 unemployed participants between 1991 and 1998 , of which 29,227, 23%, joined in 1998. While in previous years these programmes involved up to 15% of the total unemployed, in 1998 around 23% of registered unemployed people participated.

Education and training programmes have specific features tailored to the needs of individual target groups. In 1998, the following types of education and training programmes were carried out by the Employment Service.

- *Programmes of assistance in planning a professional career and in job seeking*

  A total of 7,586 unemployed people joined these programmes, 26% of the total participants in all education and training programmes. With regard to objectives and target groups, these programmes can be subdivided as follows:

  - *programmes for providing information and increasing motivation*, which, in 1998, attracted 1,147 participants, and are delivered through lectures and workshops, whose aim is to encourage the active involvement of participants in solving their unemployment problems and informing them of the opportunities provided by the Employment Service as part of the active employment policy;
  - *workshops on how to seek employment*, which, in 1998, attracted 5,390 participants, teach the unemployed the skills and knowledge they need for successful participation in the labour market; and
  - *workshops on identifying career objectives* which, in 1998, attracted 1,094 participants, are intended for those unemployed persons who need assistance in charting a career path.

- *Psycho-social rehabilitation and personal development programmes*

These are designed for difficult-to-employ categories, particularly older people and those in need of assistance in reintegrating into their social environment. In 1998, a total of 1,861 unemployed persons joined these programmes, with the main groups being, as expected, the long-term unemployed, 69.3%, unemployed people who had attained the first or second levels of education, 66.0%, and people over 40, 42.7%.

- *Functional training programmes*

Unemployed people can join these programmes, provided that they have prepared a personal employment plan, and if additional skills are required for successful job placement. The skills mostly required include computer, commercial and retail, administrative, driving and language skills. In 1998, 4,986 unemployed persons took part in these programmes.

- *General, occupational and specialist training programmes*

In 1998, the Employment Service attracted 7,736 unemployed people to these programmes, which was the highest level of participation in all the years in which active employment policy programmes have been running.

- *Programmes of training for work of the first and second levels of difficulty (USO programmes)*

These programmes are designed for jobless persons without professional qualifications who do not wish to go back to school. In 1998, 358 unemployed people were trained for work in construction, catering and cleaning.

- *On-the-job training programmes*

On-the-job training is one of the most effective programmes, since most participants in training, which can last up to six months, keep the job for at least six months after the end of training. In 1998, 6,350 jobless people found employment through this programme.

- *"Programme 5000" – education of the unemployed*

In the past the Employment Service co-financed the costs of education programmes for acquiring vocational and professional qualifications, but the support was given, mainly, to final year students and to a relatively small extent. In co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Sport, the programme was extended. The main aims of the programme are to improve the educational profile of the unemployed by integrating them into programmes of vocational and professional education and to reduce structural incompatibility within the labour market by increasing participation in the programmes for attaining vocational and professional education in required fields.

- *Joint funding of redundant workers*

The redundant workers funding programme is a preventive programme, intended to provide assistance to employers who have to lay off redundant workers. In the last two years these programmes were mainly designed to stimulate permanent development of human resources in the workplace or to find a person another job. Thus, the main aims of the programmes are to prevent or reduce the transfer from redundancy to official unemployment, to preserve productive employment, to open up new employment opportunities, to reorganise human resources in enterprises and to re-employ and retrain redundant workers.

In 1998, there were 132 programmes for the joint funding of training and additional training for redundant workers, involving a total of 1,127 redundant workers in 30 companies.

- *Refunding of contributions to employers*

This programme is mainly intended for those employers who want to employ new workers and also provide new jobs. Employers must employ particularly difficult-to-employ persons, such as first-time job seekers, the long-term unemployed, older unemployed persons and recipients of unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance. This is a selective active employment policy measure, as it targets mainly companies.

In 1998, 1,889 people were employed with the help of this programme; 662, 35.0%, were first-time job seekers; 461, 24.0%, had been unemployed for over two years; 622, 33.0%, had been receiving unemployment benefit; and 95, 5.0%, had been receiving unemployment assistance. Forty-nine persons, 3.0%, found employment as a result of this programme.

- *Support for self-employment*

The aim of the programme is to accelerate entrepreneurship and to encourage the creation of new jobs in small enterprises. This programme can take the form of education and training for self-employment or as a financial support at the start of a business operation.

In 1998, 1,630 unemployed people became self-employed, of whom 1,457 received the subsidy, an increase of 2.5% on 1997. The Employment Service also devoted a lot of attention to the encouragement of a business attitude among young people through programmes for primary and secondary school students, and to self-employment in the countryside and the introduction of co-operatives.

- *Training and employment for disabled people and the subsidising of sheltered workshops*

The objective of this programme is to help disabled people to find a new job or preserve their current one, and to progress in their professional careers.

In 1998, 1,182 disabled people took part in training and employment programmes, an increase of 8.6% on 1997. It should be noted that disabled persons also take part in other active employment policy programmes such as public works, self-employment programmes etc. The total number of employed disabled people increased by 723 or 10.7%. By the end of December 1998 the number of sheltered companies claiming a refund of costs had increased by 17, to 125, and the number of disabled people they employed by 859, or 21.3%, to 4,895. The subsidy is paid pursuant to the Rules on the Criteria for Refunding Part of the Costs to Sheltered Companies, which have been in force since September 1997.

- *Public works*

In 1998, the primary objective of public works programmes continued to be the amelioration of the consequences of long-term unemployment. The main objectives were to prevent unemployed people from becoming demoralised; to preserve and develop the working habits, knowledge and skills of unemployed people; to provide social security for unemployed people; to encourage self-employment in similar types of work; and to open up new market niches. These programmes are also very important in the development of local communities. In 1998, 2,236 public works programmes were carried out involving 10,641 jobless people. The large number of participants was due to changes in the criteria for unemployed people joining and to external partners creating new public works and national agricultural programmes.

Between 1 January and 31 December 1998, 1,805 people, 17% of participants, found employment. In keeping with the change of direction from passive to active forms of social assistance, unemployed people who were entitled to unemployment benefit or assistance and to cash assistance from social work centres were given priority for public works programmes.

The following area qualified as public works programmes:

- social security programmes;
- programmes in public administration, education, culture and tourism;
- environmental, agricultural and forestry programmes; and
- programmes for communal infrastructure.

- *Regional and local employment projects and local development initiatives*

  Most of the projects were placed in a wider context, meaning that an individual promotion centre usually incorporates all or most of the municipalities it is covering.

  The most numerous were tourism promotion programmes (five), followed by services (four), social work (two), rural development (two), promotion of trade (at home), arts and crafts (one) and human resources development programmes (one). Six programmes had been successfully concluded by the end of 1998.

  All these programmes were expected to involve 1,196 unemployed people (1,139 of them in 1998). This means that unemployed people (as part of the public works programme) must be looking for regular employment even while still working on a public works programme. They may take employment if they find it.

- *Company restructuring project*

  Under this project, state funds are provided to tackle the problem of redundant workers in companies undergoing restructuring. Thus, measures are taken before these workers become officially unemployed, in an effort to preserve sound jobs or find new ones in other companies. Participant companies can be classified in three groups.

  The first group is made up of 12 companies which joined the project in 1996. These carried out their planned staff restructuring activities and completed the project. They used to employ 15,942 workers and still employ 13,093 or 82.0% of the original total. Rehabilitation programmes show that training needs were high and that, in addition, there was a distinct lack of the crucial modern interdisciplinary skills that change rapidly. Company managers, in particular, require an almost permanent skills upgrading. Comprehensive training programmes were designed to allow firms to become competitive on both the domestic and foreign markets or prepare them for entry into foreign markets. In this context, programmes aimed particularly at their integration with the European Union.

  The second group consisted of 10 companies which joined the project in 1997. Most participated in the tender published by the Slovenian Development Corporation and, thus, joined the third group of companies involved in the restructuring project in June 1998. The combined group now consists of 43 members (Rašica, IUV, Induplati, Novoteks etc.). Restructuring is carried out as laid down in the Slovenian Development Corporation Act and the Employment Service monitors the staff adaptation part of the project. Only one company, Svila, did not join the project and bankruptcy procedures have been instigated in another, Bohor.

- *Labour Funds*

  In 1998, labour funds projects attracted 1,473 participants. Forty-five workshops on the development of professional careers, run by 29 instructors, were organised. Of the total of 802 participants who successfully completed the workshops, 205 went on to take part in employment and training programmes, 25 became self-employed and 249 found employment. A total of 323 members took part in special pilot employment projects.

Labour funds are a new form of active employment policy, with the following objectives:

- to prevent the transition of surplus workers into official unemployment, with all the accompanying material, psychological and social repercussions;
- to create opportunities for the individual or a team of surplus workers with the aim of transferring into new areas of work where demand for labour is higher;
- to assist in the staff restructuring of companies through project units; and
- to amalgamate widely-dispersed financial and other resources so as to increase the efficiency of available resources.

■ *Vocational guidance and scholarships*

- *Vocational guidance*

The Overhaul of Vocational Guidance project continued in 1998. Its aim was to restructure the vocational guidance department at the Employment Service. The changes to the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act have brought about further changes in the established practice of working with schools and schoolchildren. The increase in the volume of work was the biggest problem, since it meant that the Employment Service had to conduct, on top of its usual work with schoolchildren, more work with adults.

- *Vocational guidance for schoolchildren*

In addition to individual guidance sessions with schoolchildren and secondary-school and university students, the Employment Service carried out the testing of all seventh-grade pupils, 24,409 in total, and held a number of team conferences for eighth-grade pupils.

- *Vocational guidance for adults*

1998 was a turning point for the area of vocational guidance for unemployed persons and other adults. The most visible change occurred in the number of individual sessions, which has increased sixfold in the last two years, from 2,600 sessions in 1996, through 5,245 in 1997 to 16,710 in 1998. For the first time the number of sessions held with adults was higher than the number held with schoolchildren.

The unemployed are referred to vocational counsellors to discuss how best to obtain their first professional qualifications or general education. They also have access to vocational counsellors when they wish to change their profession or field of employment because there are no available jobs or because they lack job satisfaction. Unemployment is, frequently, not the only problem that a client registered with the Employment Service has, and, in such cases, a vocational counsellor is assigned to handle the case, which, will often require several sessions. Since vocational counsellors did not have the necessary experience and skills, the Employment Service organised extensive training programmes in 1997 and 1998, aided by foreign experts, from the Phare-supported Vocational Information and Counselling Centre, and by domestic instructors.

- *Vocational Information and Counselling Centre*

The most effective way of increasing the competitive standing of the labour force is by investing in human resources through education, training, counselling and vocational guidance. The Vocational Information and Counselling Centre provides assistance and support to all such interventions.

The Vocational Information and Counselling Centre, based in Ljubljana is designed for the following categories of users:

- young people without access to information and vocational guidance;
- unemployed people and surplus workers in need of in-depth vocational guidance;
- Employment Service staff, who can use the library and other tools for their own education purposes and to achieve better results at work; and
- anyone else wishing to obtain such information.

The establishment of other vocational information and guidance centres is planned, probably in the 10 regions that already have employment offices.

- *Scholarships*

The scholarship system, which has been regulated by the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act and the Rules on Scholarships for a number of years now, is constantly being upgraded. The new law introduced student loans as an addition to company, national and Zois scholarships. The loans will be issued by lenders chosen following a public tender. The state will provide guarantees and will subsidise the interest rates.

Company scholarships are the responsibility of employers, who may grant scholarships according to their needs.

National scholarships are intended for apprentices, secondary school students and university students who would not otherwise be able to afford to study.

Zois scholarships are intended for outstandingly gifted secondary school students, university students and post-graduate students on the basis of a recommendation of an educational institution. They can also be awarded for studying abroad.

- *Job Clubs*

The Job Clubs programme is intended for those who have been registered with the Employment Service for over six months and for first-time job seekers who have not yet had a job. Job Club courses last up to three months, with many job seekers finding employment before the programme ends. There were 17 Job Clubs in Slovenia and most operate throughout the year. On the proposal of the regional offices, temporary programmes were held in Koevje, Slovenska Bistrica and Zagorje.

Fifty-one per cent of participants found employment with the help of Job Club programmes. The average duration of club membership is 15 months. Broken down by age structure of members, two large groups predominate. The first group consists of young first-time job seekers under 25 and the second consists of persons over 35. In terms of education level the largest single group, 42.0%, is made up of those with three-year vocational school or lower education.

2. The modernisation of vocational education and training

2.1 *The organisation of education and training*

The system of education in Slovenia comprises:

- pre-school education;
- basic education (a single structure of primary and lower secondary education);
- upper secondary education;
- post-secondary vocational; and
- higher education.

2.1.1 *Pre-school education*

Slovenia has a single, well-developed system of pre-school education. Pre-school education is considered as an integral part of the education system. It is provided by pre-school institutions and pre-school units in elementary schools for children between the ages of 1 and 6. Pre-school education is not compulsory, with the exception of the one-year pre-school classes offered to children who are about to enter the eight-year elementary school system, which will remain in force until nine-year compulsory basic education is fully introduced in Slovenia.

2.1.2 *Basic education*

Basic education, combining primary and lower secondary levels of education, lasts 8 years and is compulsory. To enter first class, children must be aged 6 years and 6 months before the start of the school year although, in exceptional cases, they are accepted at 6 years of age. The eight-year basic education programme is divided into two four-year cycles: a first 4-year 'class stage' followed by a subsequent 4-year 'subject stage'.

With the reform, primary education will be extended by one year and will last for nine years. The gradual implementation of the nine-year basic education programme began during the 1999/2000 school year and will be completed in 2007/2008. During the 1999/2000 school year, 42 elementary schools were selected to pilot the nine-year programme. Children must be 6 years old to enter first class. Nine-year basic education is divided into 3 three-year cycles.

Once pupils have successfully completed their basic education, they can move on to education at a secondary school. Pupils who fulfil the legally compulsory education requirements and successfully complete at least six classes in the eight-year elementary school programme or at least seven in the nine-year elementary programme can go on to short-term vocational education.

2.1.3 Upper secondary education

Upper secondary education follows the compulsory general education programme. It is provided by secondary schools offering general education (gymnasiums), lasting for 4 years, and vocationally-oriented schools, which offer two and a half, three or four-year programmes.

2.1.3.1 Upper-secondary general education

Upper-secondary general education is an important phase between primary and higher education. General secondary schools – gymnasiums – were re-established at the beginning of the 1990s. Pupils who have successfully completed elementary school can enrol in the upper-secondary general education programme. A test of artistic skills may be required for admission to arts gymnasiums while a record of sports achievements may be required for sports gymnasiums. All general education programmes last for four years and conclude by sitting an external *Matura* examination.

The gymnasium programme provides the most general upper-secondary education programme and has a curriculum covering three basic subject areas.

- Four-year general compulsory subjects, have a prescribed syllabus and number of teaching hours which take up 80% of the curriculum.
- Special courses which are not part of the compulsory programme and which account for 14% of the curriculum as a whole. They are designed to provide in-depth study in subject areas of specific interest to individual students, preparing them for the *Matura*; and
- Compulsory elective subjects – a set of subjects from which students can choose – represent 6% of the curriculum. This part of the curriculum is different both in terms of content and method of delivery. It covers a variety of subjects which are not included in the compulsory core programme but which allow students to develop further skills.

There is a, more or less, single syllabus for the first three years whereas the fourth year is designed so that the courses prepare students for the *Matura* and therefore they cover a broad range of examination subjects. The syllabus of the fourth year is organised into modules, which cater for the aptitudes and special interests of students. Schools offer between three and five modules.

The following types of secondary general education programmes are offered at this level:

- gymnasium;
- classical gymnasium, which includes Latin and Greek;
- diocesan gymnasium, which includes Latin and Greek, religion and culture;
- sports gymnasium;
- gymnasium for the Hungarian and the Italian national minorities;
- Walfdorf gymnasium;
- professionally-oriented gymnasiums, which includes economic gymnasium, technical gymnasium with modules covering the fields of mechanical engineering, construction, wood processing, electrical engineering and the art gymnasium; and
- the International Baccalaureate programme which is offered for the last two gymnasium years and is intended for students with above-average results.

The **professionally oriented gymnasium** programme is a general secondary school programme incorporating a professional module concluding with the *Matura* and leading directly to university studies. It is designed as part of the general educational stream and introduces theoretical professional subjects into general education. About 70% of the curriculum of professionally-oriented gymnasium programmes is the same as the general gymnasium programme and the remainder is devoted to theoretical disciplinary subjects and compulsory electives. A *Matura* examination completes studies at a professionally oriented gymnasium.

Matura is an external certification examination for all students completing their studies at gymnasiums. The *Matura* examination is run and controlled by the State Examination Centre. It consists of five subjects, three of which are compulsory – the mother tongue, mathematics and the first foreign language – and two are elective. After passing the *Matura*, students can enrol for university studies directly.

General secondary school graduates can opt to enrol in a **vocational course** and obtain a technical-professional qualification. Vocational courses also provide the opportunity of transferring from the general education stream to vocational education and training. Currently all vocational courses last one year. They conclude with a final examination: the vocational *Matura*.

2.1.3.2 Upper secondary vocational and technical education and training

The duration of vocational and technical programmes at secondary level varies according to programme requirements. The following programmes were offered within the vocational education and training stream at secondary level in the 1998/99 school year:

- two and a half-year vocational education programmes (short-term vocational education);
- three-year vocational education programmes;
- two-year vocational-technical programmes to upgrade skills acquired during three-year vocational education programmes (differential programmes and the '3 + 2' option); and
- four-year technical education programmes.

Short-term vocational education programmes

The shortest forms of vocational education are short-term vocational education programmes, which last two years, conclude with a final examination and comprise theoretical and practical elements. Pupils can enrol in short-term vocational programmes after completing elementary school. However, pupils who have not managed to complete elementary school can also enrol in short-term vocational education, if they successfully complete at least 6 elementary school classes and fulfil basic legal compulsory education requirements. After completing a short-term vocational programme, pupils can enter the labour force or enrol in a further three-year vocational education programme.

Three-year secondary vocational programmes

The three-year vocational programmes are important components of upper-secondary vocational education and are intended to provide qualifications for work in the industrial, crafts and service sectors. These programmes can be provided by vocational schools alone or in co-operation with employers in the form of a dual system combining apprenticeship and school-based education.

The introduction of the dual system is often highlighted as one of the most important reforms in vocational education and training at secondary level, particularly in terms of linking education with work. The apprenticeship system has already existed in Slovenia but was abolished at the beginning of the 1980s with the introduction of Career-Oriented Education. At the end of the 1980s, employers from the craft sector initiated more practice-oriented vocational "craft programmes". The introduction of a 'real' apprenticeship system is designed to gradually replace these craft programmes as well as some of the school-based three-year vocational programmes.

Table 2.1 The main characteristics of dual-system (apprenticeship) programmes

	DUAL-SYSTEM PROGRAMMES
	Apprentice
Contract	Apprenticeship contract (apprentice/parents – employer)
Status	Special work status
Responsibility for implementation of the programme	Shared responsibility: schools for the educational part, employers for the practical part
Work ratio	An officially recognised 6-month period of work, insurance included, per year of education
Payment	Payment for the whole period of education and training (three years)
Contributions	During the 1st year contributions for old-age and disability insurance are paid by the state, in the 2nd and 3rd years they are paid 50% by the state and 50% by the employer
Entrance to employment, on completing the programme	No trial period No entrance examination

Source: Obrtnik (Craftsman), Chamber of Crafts Publication, February 1997, p.47.

In the dual system, the ratio of theoretical education and practical training is 2:3. Theoretical education is provided by schools, whilst most of the practical training is carried out by trainers in companies. Schools are responsible for providing theoretical knowledge and employers for practical training. The same principle applies to the sharing of financial responsibilities. All training places for apprentices are controlled by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Crafts. When a person enrols in a dual programme, he/she signs a standard apprenticeship contract with the employer providing practical training. The obligations and the rights of both the apprentice and the employer are laid down in the apprenticeship contract. All pupils enrolled in dual-system programmes have apprentice status for the duration of the programme, are paid a monthly wage by the employer and are socially insured.

The first pilot schools started introducing the dual system during the 1997/1998 school year, when 6 dual programmes got under way. This increased to 12 dual programmes in the 1998/99 school year rising to 18 in 1999/2000.

The existing school-based three-year vocational programmes were not abolished with the introduction of the dual system but continue as a parallel alternative. In many cases, both dual-system and school-based programmes are available. In both cases – dual-system and school-based programmes – the three-year vocational education programmes conclude with a final examination testing both theoretical and practical knowledge. The practical part of the final examination falls under the responsibility of the chambers. Special examination committees are appointed, comprising representatives of the social partners, schools and some other key institutions, which monitor both parts of the final examination.

Vocational-technical programmes

Graduates of a three-year vocational education programme can also take two-year vocational-technical programmes. Two kinds of technical vocational programme are available.

- Differential programmes are aimed at students who have successfully completed 3-year vocational programmes. In these programmes, students make up for the difference between the relevant 3-year and 4-year programme, and qualify to become professional technicians.
- The '3 + 2' model programmes are aimed at students who have completed a 3-year vocational programme during which it was impossible to train as technicians in the framework of a 4-year programme.

All vocational-technical programmes conclude with a final vocational *Matura* examination. They also provide the opportunity to continue studies at post-secondary vocational colleges or at higher professional schools. In effect, vocational-technical programmes are an alternative to the 4-year technical programmes.

Four-year technical education programmes

Secondary technical education programmes last four years[1]. Secondary technical programme curricula comprise three basic subject areas: general subjects; theoretical/technical subjects; and practical training. General subjects account for between 60 and 70% of the four-year programme. The rest of the programme is made up of theoretical technical subjects, about 20%, and practical training, about 10%.

The programmes conclude with a vocational *Matura* examination. Introduced in the 1998/99 school year, the vocational Matura examination is a partly externally prepared and internally assessed school-leaving examination in four subjects. Students who enrolled in the restructured or renewed technical programmes from that school year onwards take this examination. Students who enrolled before the vocational *Matura* examination was introduced take an internal final examination. Students who have completed secondary technical school can enter the labour market or continue their education at post-secondary vocational or professional-type higher education level.

Students who wish to enrol in university programmes can go on to take a *Matura* course and pass the *Matura* examination. Amendments to the Higher Education Act stipulate that these students are given the opportunity to pass the *Matura* examination in an additional subject and to continue their studies in a university-type programme and not only in professional-type programmes as has been the case up until now. *Matura* courses are also designed for students who dropped out of the fourth year of gymnasium and interrupted their schooling for at least one year.

Master craftsmen, foremen and managerial examinations

Another innovation in the vocational education and training system is the **master craftsmen, foremen and managerial preparatory courses and examinations**. These examinations are the responsibility of the Chamber of Crafts for master craftsmen examinations and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for foremen and managerial examinations. According to legislation on crafts, anyone who wants to run his/her own craft business must pass the master craftsmen examination. Tutors of apprentices also have to pass these examinations.

The examinations are in four parts: practical; professional theoretical; legislation and management; and pedagogical. One of the main conditions for application to take master craftsmen and foremen examinations is that candidates have completed a course at a three-year vocational school and have a minimum of three years' professional experience, or a post-secondary degree from vocational college with at least one years' professional experience. These examinations provide students with:

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[1] With the exception of a five-year trade academy programme. However, no new entrants have been accepted since the 1997/98 school year.

- a basis for comparing professional knowledge and technical knowledge;
- the relevant knowledge and skills to perform high-quality professional work, to manage and operate working processes, team and human resources management; and
- opportunities for vertical transition, since candidates who have successfully completed a master craftsmen, foremen or managerial examination can enrol in post-secondary vocational colleges if they pass examinations in general education subjects.

2.1.4 *Post secondary vocational education*

To complete the vocational education and training vertical structure, an innovative **post-secondary vocational education** programme was introduced by the Vocational and Technical Education Act in 1996. It is provided by post-secondary vocational colleges, which are separate from higher education establishments. The first post-secondary vocational colleges were established in October 1996. Post-secondary vocational education differs in content and transfer options from the former short-term higher education programmes offered by universities prior to the adoption of the Higher Education Act.

Post-secondary vocational programmes are designed as a specific form of third-level education with a markedly practical character. Practical training represents around 40% of the programme and is carried out in enterprises. These programmes last for 2 years.

To enrol in a vocational college, students have to meet one of the following admission requirements: *Matura*, vocational *Matura* or final examination, respectively, or the general part of the vocational Matura examination in combination with the master craftsmen examination.

Post-secondary vocational education ends with a *diploma* examination. Students who have passed a *diploma* examination receive a *diploma* mentioning the name of the programme and the title of the vocational qualification. A post-secondary vocational *diploma* enables students to start work in specific occupations. Since the 1998/99 academic year, vocational college graduates have been able to enrol in the second year of professional-type higher education programmes if the higher education institution providing this type of course allows such an arrangement.

2.1.5 *Higher education*

Higher education has a two-pronged structure: **academically oriented university-type studies** and **professional-type studies**. Faculties and art academies, which are parts of universities, and individual faculties established as private institutions, offer both types of programmes, while professional colleges provide only professional-type programmes. Courses are organised at two levels. At **undergraduate level**, students obtain a *diploma* mentioning the first of the degree titles. At **post-graduate level**, students obtain either the second-degree title of *Specialist*, or the academic title of either *Magister Znanosti* (comparable to a master's degree) or *Doktor Znanosti* (comparable to a Ph.D.). Two universities and independent higher education institutions provide higher education in Slovenia[2].

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[2] There were 46 higher education institutions in Slovenia in the 1998/99 school year, 39 public and 7 private:
- the University of Ljubljana comprising 20 faculties, 3 art academies and 3 professional colleges;
- the University of Maribor comprising 9 faculties and 1 professional college;
- seven private single higher education institutions, including 2 faculties and 5 professional colleges; and
- one professional college, a state higher education institution governed by the Ministry of the Interior which is also an associate member of the University of Ljubljana.

The basic admission requirement for a **university-type study programme** is a *Matura*. These programmes last between four and six years and conclude with the *diploma* examination. Successful students receive a diploma mentioning the professional title and field of study. A university *diploma* enables students to enter the labour market or to continue their studies at post-graduate level.

The basic admission requirement for **professional-type study programmes** is either a *Matura* or a vocational *Matura* after completing a 4-year secondary technical education programme. Professional-type study programmes usually last 3 years and exceptionally last 4 years. They include practical training and conclude with the *diploma* examination. Successful students receive a *diploma* mentioning their professional title and field of study. Students can enter the labour market or continue their studies at post-graduate level leading to a specialist degree - *Specializacija*.

Transfer between university-type and professional-type courses is possible in both directions. Candidates transferring to university-type courses must either have passed a *Matura* examination or achieved a sufficiently high average grade (GPA of at least 8 out of 10).

Both types of programmes can be organised as full-time or part-time studies. Part-time studies are designed for adults and differ from full-time studies in the organisation of lectures and examinations and in that participants have to pay for their studies.

At **post-graduate level**, study programmes lead to the degrees of ***Specializacija, Magisterij*** and ***Doktorat Znanosti***.

a) Admission requirements for post-graduate programmes leading to *Specializacija* are either a university degree or a professional higher education degree. These programmes last between 1 and 2 years and conclude with the presentation of a thesis. Students who have successfully presented a thesis are granted a degree mentioning their professional title of specialist and the specific field of study. Specialisation leads to employment in a given profession.

b) A university degree is the sole admission requirement for post-graduate study programmes leading to *Magisterij*. These programmes last for 2 years and conclude with the presentation of a thesis. Students who have successfully presented a thesis are conferred with the academic title of *Magister Znanosti* (Master of Arts, or Master of Science) in a specific field of study. *Magisterij* leads either to employment or to doctorate study programmes.

c) Admission requirements for post-graduate study leading to *Doktorat Znanosti* are either a university degree or a *Magisterij* degree. Post-university doctorate study programmes last 4 years. Doctorate study programmes taken after obtaining a *Magisterij* degree last 2 years. Students who have completed a *Magisterij* degree can continue their studies for a further two years to obtain their doctoral degree. Students who have enrolled in 4-year doctorate programmes can interrupt them and complete their studies at *Magisterij* level instead. (The Education System in Slovenia 1999, Ministry of Education and Sport, Eurydice Unit, December 1999.)

Table 2.2 Classification of educational programmes by stage and level (ISCED 1997)

Stages and levels of education	Age	Duration	ISCED 1997
Pre-school education*	3-6		0
Basic education: first cycle Basic education: first two 3-year cycles	7-11 6-12	4 years in 8-year elementary school 6 years in 9-year elementary school	1
Basic education: second cycle Basic education: third 3-year cycle	12-15 13-15(16)	4 years in 8-year elementary school 3 years in 9-year elementary school (plus the non-compulsory tenth year of schooling)	2A
Short-term vocational education	15-17.5	2.5 years	3C
Secondary vocational education	15-18	3 years	3C
Secondary technical education Vocational-technical education	15-19 15-20	4 years 3+2 years	3B
General secondary education	15-19	4 years	3A
Vocational courses	19 and over	1 year	4B
Matura course	19 and over	1 year	4A
Education leading to master craftsmen examinations	22 and over	Not specified	4C
Post-secondary vocational education	19-21	2 years	5B – short programmes
Short-term higher education**	19-21/22	2 to 3 years	5A-short programmes
Professional-type higher education	19-22/23	3 or 4 years	5B – long programmes
University-type of higher education	19-23/25	4 to 6 years	5A – long programmes
Post-graduate education – *specializacija*	22 and over	1 to 2 years	5B – second degree
Post-graduate education – *Magisterij*	23 and over	2 years	5A – second degree
Post-graduate education – *Doktorat Znanosti*	23 and over	4 years	6
Post-graduate education after Magisterij – *Doktorat Znanosti*	25 and over	2 years	6

* *In Slovenia, pre-school education is not classified as part of the education by stages system.*

** *The Higher Education Act abolished short-term higher education programmes. The last students enrolled in the 1995/96 academic year. Students who had enrolled before that are entitled to complete their studies. This means they still appear in educational statistics for 1998/99.*

Source: *The Education System in Slovenia 1999, Ministry of Education and Sport, Eurydice Unit, Ljubljana, December 1999.*

2.2. *The main features of the vocational education and training system*

2.2.1 *Structure of enrolment in upper-secondary education*

Of all pupils enrolled in upper secondary education in the 1998/1999 school year, almost three-quarters were enrolled in vocational and technical education programmes and only one-quarter or 27.4% in general secondary education programmes (gymnasiums). More specifically, the pattern of students enrolled in full-time upper secondary education programmes was as follows:

- 2.8% were enrolled in short-term vocational programmes;
- 28.2% were enrolled in three-year secondary vocational education programmes;
- 36.2% were enrolled in four-year secondary technical education programmes;
- 5.4% were enrolled in vocational-technical (two-year programmes after completing three-year secondary vocational programmes); and
- 27.4% were enrolled in general education programmes (general, classical and professionally oriented gymnasiums).

Generally speaking, trends in recent years in Slovenia point to an increase in the number of enrolments in secondary general education programmes and in vocational-technical programmes. On the other hand, young peoples' interest in short-term and secondary vocational programmes as well as technical programmes has been waning.

In terms of gender structure, 50.1% of all students are female. The majority of women students are to be found in general education programmes (gymnasium), where they represent 59.2% of all students. They account for 40.6% of those enrolled in 3-year vocational programmes and only 27.6% of students in short-term vocational programmes.

Table 2.3 Enrolment of young people in regular full-time programmes in upper-secondary education at the beginning of the 1997/98 and 1998/99 school year by type of programme, numbers, % and gender

Type of programme	1997/98 school year		1998/99 school year			
	No. of students enrolled	**% of students enrolled**	**No. of students enrolled**	**No. of women**	**% of students enrolled**	**% of women**
Short-term vocational programmes	3,241	3.0	3,013	832	2.8	27.6
Secondary vocational programmes – 3 years	31,618	29.4	30,011	12,208	28.2	40.6
Secondary technical programmes – 4 years	40,895	38.1	38,522	20,175	36.2	52.4
Vocational-technical programmes – 2 years	4,884	4.6	5,768	2,812	5.4	48.8
Sub-total: all vocational and technical programmes	80,638	75.1	77,314	36,027	72.6	46.6
Gymnasium – general education programmes	26,724	24.9	29,244	17,315	27.4	59.2
TOTAL	107,362	100.0	106,558	53,342	100.0	50.1

Source: Statistics Office, 1998,1999.

Analysis of enrolment by fields of vocational education and training, shows that over half of all students enrol in a total of three programmes: general gymnasium programmes, 24.4%; economics, 21.2%; and metallurgy and mechanical engineering, 9.3%. Fifty per cent of all students are female but there are significant differences in terms of the areas of study they choose. Women dominate in textiles, personal services, teacher training, economics, social sciences, leather processing, healthcare and culture. On the other hand, men are in the majority in wood processing, electrical engineering and computer science, metallurgy and mechanical engineering, mining, forestry, and justice and home affairs.

Table 2.4 ***Enrolment of young people in regular full-time upper-secondary education programmes at the beginning of the 1997/98 and 1998/99 school years by field of vocational education and training and gender***

Field of vocational education and training	1997/98 school year		1998/99 school year			
	No. of students enrolled	% of students enrolled	No. of students enrolled	No. of women	% of students enrolled	% of women
Agriculture and food processing	6,495	6.0	6,334	3,349	5.9	52.9
Forestry	115	0.1	113	6	0.1	5.3
Leather processing	214	0.2	143	128	0.1	89.5
Textiles	4,285	4.0	3,389	3,284	3.2	96.9
Chemistry, pharmacy, rubber processing, non-metals	1,479	1.4	1,360	938	1.3	69.0
Wood processing	3,598	3.4	3,520	72	3.3	2.0
Construction	3,058	2.8	2,910	324	2.7	11.1
Catering and tourism	6,001	5.6	5,944	2,566	5.6	43.2
Economics	23,110	21.5	22,631	15,595	21.2	68.9
Paper and printing	741	0.7	660	276	0.6	41.8
Electrical engineering and computer science	8,234	7.7	7,880	61	7.4	0.8
Metallurgy and mechanical engineering	10,920	10.2	9,895	133	9.3	1.3
Transport and communications	1,036	1.0	1,084	334	1.0	30.8
Mining	211	0.2	230	1	0.2	0.4
Healthcare	4,724	4.4	5,013	3,916	4.7	78.1
Teacher training	710	0.6	805	794	0.8	98.6
Social sciences	1,334	1.2	1,267	1,122	1.2	88.6
Culture	1,208	1.1	744	547	0.7	73.5
Gymnasium – general education	25,973	24.2	25,964	15,831	24.4	61.0
Personal services	2,624	2.4	2,870	2,555	2.7	89.0
Professionally oriented gymnasium	751	0.7	3,280	1,484	3.1	45.2
Justice and home affairs	541	0.5	522	26	0.5	5.0
TOTAL	107,362	100.0	106,558	53,342	100.0	50.1

Source: Statistics Office, 1999.

According to the table above, the sharpest decline of interest has occurred in the textiles and metallurgy and mechanical engineering fields. The table also shows that a greater proportion of basic education graduates opted for professionally oriented gymnasiums as an alternative to vocational secondary schools.

Generally speaking, student enrolment figures do not follow labour market trends and developments but reflect personal interest and existing vocational school structures and capacities.

Table 2.5 Enrolment in short-term vocational programmes by field of study and gender, at beginning of the 1997/98 and 1998/99 school year (young, full-time students)

Field of study	1997/98 school year		1998/99 school year		
	No. of students enrolled	**% of students enrolled**	**No. of students enrolled**	**% of students enrolled**	**% of women**
Agriculture and food processing	934	28.8	857	28.4	44.1
Metallurgy and mechanical engineering	874	27.0	790	26.3	0.3
Construction	468	14.4	393	13.1	0
Textiles	382	11.8	323	10.7	94.7
Wood processing	280	8.6	305	10.1	5.6
Other	303	9.4	345	11.4	37.4
TOTAL	3,241	100.0	3,013	100.0	27.6

Source: Statistics Office, 1999.

In the 1998/99 school year, enrolment in short-term vocational programmes was 7.0% lower than the previous year. Most students enrolled in programmes in the fields of agriculture and food processing, 28.4%, and in metallurgy and mechanical engineering, 26.3%. Women accounted for 27.6% of all enrolled students, but they predominated clearly in the textiles sector.

Table 2.6 Enrolment in 3-year secondary vocational programmes by field of study and gender at the beginning of the 1997/98 and 1998/99 school year (young, full-time students)

Field of study	1997/98 school year		1998/99 school year		
	No. of students enrolled	**% of students enrolled**	**No. of students enrolled**	**% of students enrolled**	**% of women**
Economics	7,758	24.5	7,841	26.1	68.5
Metallurgy and mechanical engineering	6,587	20.8	5,728	19.1	0.9
Catering and tourism	3,382	10.7	3,219	10.7	32.8
Agriculture and food-processing	2,860	9.0	2,767	9.2	54.1
Electrical engineering	2,686	8.5	2,610	8.7	0.1
Textiles	2,303	7.3	1,618	5.4	97.3

Field of study	1997/98 school year		1998/99 school year		
	No. of students enrolled	% of students enrolled	No. of students enrolled	% of students enrolled	% of women
Personal services	1,959	6.8	2,353	7.8	90.6
Wood processing	2,065	6.5	1,996	6.6	0.9
Other	1,818	5.9	1,879	6.3	26.7
TOTAL	31,618	100.0	30,011	100.0	40.6

Source: Statistics Office, 1999.

In the 1998/99 school year, enrolment in 3-year secondary vocational programmes also declined by 5.1% or 1,607 pupils. Interest by field of study remained unchanged – most students enrolled in economics programmes, where enrolment increased, and metallurgy and mechanical engineering, where the numbers decreased slightly. Women accounted for 40.6% of all enrolments but they dominated clearly in textiles and personal services programmes.

Table 2.7 Enrolment in 4-year secondary technical programmes by field of study and gender at the beginning of the 1997/98 and 1998/99 school year (young, full-time students)

Field of study	1997/98 school year		1998/99 school year		
	No. of students enrolled	% of students enrolled	No. of students enrolled	% of students enrolled	% of women
Economics	13,891	34.0	13,101	34.0	68.0
Electrical engineering and computer science	5,038	12.3	4,630	12.0	1.3
Healthcare	4,724	11.5	4,753	12.3	78.3
Catering and tourism	2,619	6.4	2,725	7.1	55.4
Metallurgy and mechanical engineering	2,481	6.1	2,175	5.6	2.6
Agriculture and food processing	2,196	5.4	2,012	5.2	52.3
Other	9,946	24.3	9,126	23.7	53.3
TOTAL	40,895	100.0	38,522	100.0	52.4

Source: Statistics Office, 1999.

Enrolment in secondary technical programmes dropped by 5.8% or 2,373 pupils. The composition of students per programme field remained largely unchanged. Most pupils enrolled in economics programmes followed by healthcare and electrical engineering and computer science programmes.

Table 2.8 Enrolment in vocational-technical programmes by field of study and gender at the beginning of the 1997/98 and 1998/99 school years (young, full-time students)

Field of study	1997/98 school year		1998/99 school year		
	No. of students enrolled	% of students enrolled	No. of students enrolled	% of students enrolled	% of women
Economics	1,447	29.6	1,689	29.3	77.3
Metallurgy and mechanical engineering	978	20.0	1,202	20.8	2.6
Textiles	913	18.7	842	14.6	98.3
Agriculture and food processing	505	10.3	698	12.1	60.3
Wood processing	353	7.2	448	7.7	0.9
Electrical engineering	329	6.7	476	8.3	0
Other	359	7.5	413	7.2	55.4
TOTAL	4,884	100.0	5,768	100.0	48.8

Source: Statistics Office, 1999.

Enrolment in vocational-technical programmes increased by 15.3% or 884 pupils, but the structure of enrolment did not change much. Most students enrolled in economics, 29.3%, and metallurgy and mechanical engineering, 20.8%.

2.2.2 *Projected enrolment in secondary education programmes until 2005*

Ministry of Education and Sport projections on enrolment in secondary education programmes until 2005 predict that **the number of enrolments in secondary education programmes from 2001 to 2005 will drop by 11%**. The number of pupils and apprentices enrolled in first grade is expected to drop because of the decline in the number of children of elementary school age. However, because the duration of schooling is increasing, the total number of pupils in secondary education will not decline as rapidly.

Up to 5% of all pupils are expected to enrol in short-term vocational programmes. Because of the further development of secondary vocational dual programmes, an increase is expected in enrolment for such programmes, while enrolment in school-based secondary vocational programmes should be relatively lower. This means that **the proportion of young people in dual programmes is estimated to increase from 15% in 2001 to 36% in 2005**. As a result, **enrolment in school-based secondary vocational programmes is expected to decline from 85% in 2001 to 64% in 2005**.

The decline in enrolment in secondary technical and vocational-technical education will result from an **increase in the number of pupils in professionally oriented gymnasiums**. In 2001, 31% of all pupils and, in 2005, 29% of all pupils are expected to enrol in secondary technical education programmes.

One-third of all first-grade secondary education pupils should enrol in general gymnasiums and amongst these, the number of pupils enrolled in professionally oriented gymnasiums should increase slightly. In 2001, therefore, some 31% of all secondary education pupils are expected to enrol in gymnasiums, increasing to 33% by 2005. The structure of enrolment per programme is not expected to change significantly.

2.2.3 *Vocational programmes within the dual system*

The first dual-system vocational programmes, for 6 occupations, were introduced in Slovenia in the 1997/1998 school year. A total of 28 dual programmes were prepared in the 1996-1999 period and 8 new programmes will be prepared for the 2000/2001 school year. During the 1998/1999 school year, apprentices were enrolled in 12 different programmes under the dual system and in 18 programmes during the 1999/2000 school year.

Table 2.9 Apprentices in dual vocational education and training, 1997-1999

	1997/98 school year	1998/99 school year	1999/2000 school year
Generation of 97/98	694	579	580
Generation of 98/99	–	900	821
Generation of 99/2000	–	–	1058
TOTAL	694	1,479	2,459

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport.

Table 2.10 Apprentices – beginners in the 1998/99 and 1999/2000 school years

Occupations	1998/99 school year				1999/2000 school year			
	Available training places	Registered apprenticeship contracts		Structure of enrolment	Available training places	Registered apprenticeship contracts		Structure of enrolment
	No.	No.	%	%	No.	No.	%	%
Car mechanic	275	225	81.9	26.7	269	228	84.8	21.9
Plumber	138	39	28.3	4.6	104	39	37.5	3.7
Joiner	405	221	54.6	26.2	356	243	68.3	23.4
Butcher	39	10	25.6	1.2	46	18	39.1	1.7
Mason	213	70	32.9	8.3	194	73	37.6	7.0
Carpenter	190	17	8.9	2.0	167	26	15.6	2.5
Cook	120	34	28.3	4.0	117	95	81.2	9.1
Waiter	159	14	8.8	1.7	110	50	45.5	4.8
Florist	57	30	52.6	3.6	41	19	46.3	1.8
Hairdresser	270	156	57.8	18.5	222	139	62.6	13.4
Plumber roofer	99	8	8.1	0.9	102	7	6.9	0.7
Mechanical installations installer	170	18	10.6	2.1	110	16	14.5	1.5

Occupations	1998/99 school year				1999/2000 school year			
	Available training places	**Registered apprenticeship contracts**		**Structure of enrolment**	**Available training places**	**Registered apprenticeship contracts**		**Structure of enrolment**
	No.	No.	%	%	No.	No.	%	%
Gardener	–	–	–	–	7	4	57.1	0.4
Baker	–	–	–	–	41	11	26.8	1.1
Painter	–	–	–	–	32	13	40.6	1.2
Confectioner	–	–	–	–	29	20	69.0	1.9
Upholsterer	–	–	–	–	16	8	50.0	0.8
Dressmaker – tailor	–	–	–	–	30	30	100	2.9
TOTAL	2,135	842	39.4	100.0	1,931	1,040	53.8	100.0

Source: Centre for Vocational Education and Training, Chamber of Crafts, Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Based on apprenticeship contracts concluded, a comparison, between the supply of training places and those actually occupied reveals an increase from 25% in the 1997/1998 school year to 39% in the second year. This increased to almost 54% in the 1999/2000 school year. However, these figures also illustrate that **dual training programmes are not yet sufficiently popular, as young people still prefer school-based forms of training to training for the same occupation in the dual system. This also raises the question of the quality of training provision**.

Among the most popular dual training programmes are those to become a car mechanic, joiner or hairdresser and, in the 1999/2000 school year, cook and confectioner. Almost 45% of all apprentices in the dual system opted for programmes to become car mechanics or joiners in the 1999/2000 school year.

When dual programmes were first created, experts drew, to a great extent, on the experience of the previous craft-type vocational education programmes. This was the case both for the preparation of new programmes, the delivery of in-company training and the selection of employers. The effects of this continuity are particularly evident in the fact that the success of dual-system programmes was much greater among the first generation of apprentices than in subsequent years. **The number of dual programmes has been increasing rapidly to reach over 3 times the number recorded in 1997. However, the increase in available programmes has not been matched either by a sufficient number of pupils willing to be trained in the dual system or a complementary network of school provision.**

In June 1999, interim knowledge and skills tests were carried out for the first time amongst apprentices concluding their second year of training. Despite certain deficiencies, the results of interim tests were generally positive. The scepticism of vocational schools with regard to the effectiveness and quality of dual-system programmes has been falling and apprentices are increasingly expressing a positive attitude towards the training. Nevertheless, **doubts about the quality of the dual system will only be completely removed if national criteria for the assessment of vocational qualifications are introduced. This will require the organisation of an adequate testing of knowledge and skills through external verification at the end of all dual-system programmes**. The first generation of apprentices will conclude their training under the dual system at the end of the 1999/2000 school year.

Because of the lack of an overall strategy for the development of the dual system, the important issue of striking the right balance between the dual system and the traditional school-based system is still open to question. The supply of dual-system programmes has been growing much faster than available training places and young peoples' interest in such programmes. **Pupils enrolled in dual-training programmes account for only about 10% of all pupils in secondary vocational education.** This low take-up is also influenced by the type of vocational guidance provided in elementary schools, which traditionally gives a negative image of the dual system. There are also significant regional differences in terms of the stage of development of the dual system.

It will be necessary in the near future to place a greater emphasis on the implementation and evaluation of dual-system programmes and less to the preparation of new programmes. New dual-system programmes will be developed in the services field. **Up until now, programmes were introduced mostly in the traditional industrial sphere and were based too much on existing programme materials and a traditional approach to programme design.** More effort is needed to improve the quality of the dual system. Currently, the system is being implemented in parallel with school-based vocational education. However, enrolment trends among car mechanics, joiners and hairdressers indicate that, in some areas, there is a likelihood that dual training will predominate or even become the exclusive form of vocational education and training.

An overall strategy of dual-system vocational education development needs to be prepared in the near future, which will aim to:

- make advance provision for the gradual growth of intake;
- introduce new dual-system programmes, particularly in the field of services;
- specify which areas of school-based vocational education should be prioritised, in which areas school-based and dual systems should be carried out in parallel and in which areas only dual-system vocational programmes should be offered;
- prepare a plan to stimulate participation by employers;
- ensure inter-company training centres are set up; and
- encourage young people and adults to enrol in dual-system programmes through scholarship policies etc. (Medveš, 1999).

Despite the lack of evaluation of the dual system in Slovenia, experience shows that **general education and theoretical programmes are often too demanding, difficult and abstract, and that the link between theory and practice is not strong enough**.

Currently only young people have the opportunity of being trained in dual programmes, although this form of training may also be suitable for training adults, particularly the unemployed. It is necessary to broaden the scope of vocational training programmes in line with the labour market demands and the interests of potential course participants as well as to **adapt the programmes to the specific needs of adults**. We also recommend examining the possibility of **introducing dual forms of training in short-term vocational education**.

2.2.4 *Vocational courses*

Vocational programmes were introduced for the first time during the 1996/97 school year when four education establishments delivered one-year vocational courses in the fields of tourism, economics and pharmacy. During the 1997/98 school year, three secondary schools provided vocational courses in economics and tourism, while in 1998/99 only two secondary schools provided programmes in these fields. Other than the declining numbers of schools providing vocational courses and vocational course programmes, the number of students taking these courses also fell from 157 in the 1996/97 school year to only 57 in 1998/99[3]. In addition, the success rate of students in vocational courses is very low with fewer than 50% of students managing to successfully complete the programme each year. There are a number of reasons for this high drop-out rate amongst these students. Many of them find jobs or manage to enrol in higher education programmes or they simply realise that the study obligations are beyond their ability. In reality, despite a number of efforts, vocational courses have not been revived in practice. It is now necessary to develop an overall strategy for the introduction and implementation of vocational courses and to motivate students to enrol in them.

2.2.5 *Master craftsmen, foremen and managerial examinations*

A total of 48 examination syllabuses for master craftsmen examinations have now been prepared. In 1998, the Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education approved the examination syllabuses for 14 master craftsmen examinations, 2 foremen examinations and 1 managerial examination. The remaining examination syllabuses for 34 master craftsmen and 2 foremen examinations have yet to be endorsed by the Council of Experts. In 1999, the programme for the pedagogical part of the examinations was finalised and approved by the Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education as well as by the Council of Experts for General Education. The syllabus for the practical, professional-theoretical and legislation-management parts of the examinations will be prepared by those responsible for setting master craftsmen, foremen and managerial courses and examinations.

The National Parliament adopted amendments to the Vocational and Technical Education Act in 1999, giving full responsibility to the **Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the implementation of the foremen and managerial examinations**. The Ministry of Education and Sport, the Ministry of Small Business and Tourism and the Ministry of Economic Relations and Development agreed and adopted Regulations on the conditions and methods of implementation for the foremen and managerial examinations, while Regulations on the conditions and methods of implementation for master craftsmen examinations are in the final stages of adoption.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry appointed members of examination committees and special training has been provided for them. The Chamber of Crafts engaged external experts to prepare appropriate study materials for the practical and professional theoretical components for master craftsmen examination candidates. The study materials for the pedagogical part of the examinations have also been finalised. However, the profession of master has not yet been clearly defined in terms of occupational standards. **The first master craftsmen, foremen and managerial examinations are expected to take place in the second half of 2000.**

2.2.6 *Professionally-oriented gymnasiums*

The number of pupils enrolled in professionally oriented gymnasiums in the 1998/99 school year increased more than fourfold compared to the previous year. However, they still accounted for about only **11% of all pupils in secondary general programmes**. 43.2% of professionally oriented gymnasium pupils enrolled in the Economics Gymnasium. The percentage of girls was 45.2%.

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[3] Data received directly from schools.

Table 2.11 Enrolment in professionally oriented gymnasiums by programme type and gender at the beginning of the 1998/99 school year

Type of gymnasium	No. of students enrolled	No. of women	% of students enrolled	% of women
Economic Gymnasium	1,418	887	43.2	62.5
Technical Gymnasium	1,196	212	36.5	17.7
Art Gymnasium	666	385	20.3	57.8
TOTAL: all professionally-oriented gymnasiums	3,280	1,484	100.0	45.2
TOTAL: all gymnasiums	29,165	17,265	100.0	59.2

Source: Statistics Office, 1999.

2.2.7 *Drop-outs from secondary vocational and technical education*

Student drop-out is one of the main problems in vocational and technical education and training in Slovenia. The Employment Service has been monitoring the progress of pupils in secondary education[4] for many years, particularly for the purpose of counselling and career guidance.

The first drop-outs are recorded at elementary school level and affect, in particular, pupils who fulfil their elementary school obligations in the lower grades - mainly because they have repeated some years - or finish elementary school but do not continue their schooling at secondary level. Some 2,000 to 3,000 such pupils were recorded each year over the past 10 years, accounting for approximately 10% of each generation leaving elementary school.

As a rule, these pupils are aged 15 to 16 years and have experienced learning difficulties. They have acquired insufficient knowledge in elementary school, frequently live in bad social conditions and lack the motivation to continue their education. A great majority, but not all of them, enrol in elementary school programmes for adults. There are no specialised institutions or individuals catering for this particular group in Slovenia. They are often dealt with by social work centres. Some of these pupils return to elementary schools to seek advice from counsellors. There is no reliable record or consistent monitoring of pupils who do not continue schooling in secondary education programmes. Amongst the characteristics of drop-outs who have registered as unemployed at Slovenia's Employment Service is the significantly lower educational attainment of their parents than those of other categories of young unemployed people. (Gregorič-Brezavšček, B. 1999).

Another large group of drop-outs are those who leave secondary education. The final drop-out rate of the last 5 age cohorts of young people leaving secondary education ranged from 13 to 18%. However, this figure has been falling in recent years. **The latest data on the age cohort which enrolled in secondary education for the first time in the 1993/94 school year reveal that in a 5-year monitoring period, a total 13% of pupils failed to complete the programmes.** The drop-out rate is highest in short-term vocational education. It reached 31.9% for the 1993 age cohort and this has been increasing further in recent years. However, it should be noted that pupils enrolled in short-term vocational programmes represent a minority, 3-4%, of all pupils in secondary education.

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[4] Since 1999, the Employment Service and the Ministry of Education and Sport jointly monitor student drop-out rates.

High drop-out rates are also a feature of secondary vocational education but have been decreasing slightly in recent years. The drop-out rate in secondary technical and vocational-technical programmes is below the total average: 11.9% compared to 16.6%. **The final drop-out rate for the 1993 age cohort from all vocational and technical education programmes was 15.0%, while the drop-out rate from gymnasiums was considerably lower at 6.5%.** With the exception of short-term vocational and secondary general education, the drop-out rate for girls was lower than for boys.

Analysis by the Employment Service reveals that the highest proportion, 40 to 50% of all drop-outs, drop out after the first year of secondary education, that only about 30% drop out after the second year and that those who drop out after their third year account for the remaining 20%. It is exceptional that pupils drop out during their final year. This trend is typical for all types of secondary education.

Table 2.12 ***Drop-outs from regular (full-time) secondary education programmes, by type of programme and gender, 1991-93 age cohorts***

	Drop-outs: 1991 age cohort	**Drop-outs: 1992 age cohort**	**Drop-outs: 1993 age cohort**	
	Drop-out rate (%)	**Drop-out rate (%)**	**Absolute number**	**Drop-out rate (%)**
ALL				
1- to 2-year (short) vocational programmes	21.3	29.4	344	31.9
2- and 3-year secondary vocational programmes	26.8	18.6	1,465	16.6
Technical and vocational-technical programmes	14.9	12.8	1,243	11.9
SUB-TOTAL: all vocational and technical programmes	20.4	16.2	3,052	15.0
General secondary programmes	5.9	7.0	418	6.5
TOTAL: all programmes at the secondary level	17.2	14.1	3,470	13.0
FEMALE DROP-OUTS				
1- to 2-year (short) vocational programmes	18.6	28.8	93	34.4
2- and 3-year secondary vocational programmes	34.2	18.4	529	14.5
Technical and vocational-technical programmes	14.0	12.2	518	10.0
SUB-TOTAL: all vocational and technical programmes	21.7	15.2	1,140	12.5
General secondary programmes	5.3	6.6	263	6.7
TOTAL: all programmes at the secondary level	17.0	12.7	1,403	10.8

	Drop-outs: 1991 age cohort	Drop-outs: 1992 age cohort	Drop-outs: 1993 age cohort	
	Drop-out rate (%)	Drop-out rate (%)	Absolute number	Drop-out rate (%)
MALE DROP-OUTS				
1- to 2-year (short) vocational programmes	22.2	29.6	251	31.0
2- and 3-year vocational programmes	22.0	18.7	936	18.0
Technical and vocational-technical programmes	15.9	13.6	725	13.9
SUB-TOTAL: all vocational and technical programmes	19.3	17.2	1,912	17.0
General secondary programmes	7.0	7.6	155	6.2
TOTAL: all programmes at the secondary level	17.4	15.2	2,067	15.0

Note: *Drop-out rates refer to pupils who failed to finish a programme during a five-year monitoring period.*

Source: *Employment Service, Department of Vocational Counselling (Data for classes of 91 and 92); Ministry of Education and Sport and Employment Service (Data for generation of 93).*

If account is taken of all pupils who failed to complete the programme in which they enrolled within a regular prescribed period, the drop-out rates are much higher, ranging from 50% in short-term vocational education to 37% in secondary vocational education and 30.5% in secondary technical and vocational-technical education.

Table 2.13 Drop-outs from the 1993 age cohort – percentage of pupils who did not complete the programme in which they enrolled in the normal prescribed period

	Total		Females		Males	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1- to 2-year (short) vocational programmes	548	50.7	148	54.8	400	49.4
2- and 3-year vocational programmes	3,303	37.4	1,171	32.2	2,132	41.1
Technical and vocational technical programmes	3,171	30.5	1,276	24.6	1,895	36.2
SUB-TOTAL: all vocational and technical programmes	7,022	34.6	2,595	28.6	4,427	39.4
General secondary programmes	1,270	19.8	746	19.1	524	20.8
TOTAL: all programmes at the secondary level	8,292	31.0	3,341	25.7	4,951	36.0

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport and the Employment Service.

Table 2.14 Secondary vocational and technical education programmes with the highest drop-out rates (1993 age cohort)

Short-term vocational programmes			**Secondary vocational programmes**			**Secondary technical and vocational-technical programmes**		
Programmes	**Drop-out rates**		**Programmes**	**Drop-out rates**		**Programmes**	**Drop-out rates**	
	Drop-out 1	**Drop-out 2**		**Drop-out 1**	**Drop-out 2**		**Drop-out 1**	**Drop-out 2**
Assistant dressmaker	37.3	59.0	Metal worker	26.9	52.8	Trade technician	33.6	41.4
Metal-worker	31.0	51.7	Machine mechanic	25.4	49.1	Chemical technician	22.5	54.2
Wood-worker	24.8	47.8	Metal worker - solderer	24.8	44.7	Traffic technician	19.0	75.4
			Vehicle mechanic	21.5	44.3	Graphic technician	18.9	47.2
			Waiter	21.0	43.2	Hotel trade technician	17.0	30.9
			Business secretary	19.2	28.2	Civil technician	16.9	36.5
			Car mechanic	19.1	55.5	Electro-technician energetics	16.1	56.5
			Precision mechanic and watchmaker	19.0	49.0	Mechanical engineering technician	15.8	39.4
			Butcher	18.5	36.9			
			Electronic electrician	16.5	49.3			
			Cook	16.2	32.7			
			Hairdresser (craft programme)	16.0	24.0			
			Confectioner	15.2	39.0			

Note: *Drop-out 1 represents the final drop-out rate of pupils in secondary education programmes, i.e. the percentage of pupils who left secondary education and did not finish any type of secondary education programme.*
Drop-out 2 represents the percentage of pupils who did not complete education programmes within the normal prescribed period and did not finish the programme in which they enrolled.

Source: *Ministry of Education and Sport and Employment Service.*

Only programmes with 100 or more pupils enrolled and with a drop-out rate of 15% or over were considered.

It should be noted that there are no significant differences between the regions. **Drop-out rates are highest and above national average in the two most developed regions, i.e., Ljubljana and Koper at 14.6% and 16.3%, respectively.**

Table 2.15 Drop-out rates measured by Employment Service regional offices (1993 age cohort)

	LJ	VE	MB	MS	NM	NG	KR	KP	CE	SE	ALL
1- to 2-year (short) vocational programmes	34.0	26.2	40.1	28.9	18.6	36.9	34.5	35.2	19.2	46.4	31.9
2- and 3-year vocational programmes	18.2	13.1	14.2	12.9	24.1	11.9	17.0	25.0	16.3	15.5	16.6
Technical and vocational-technical programmes	16.1	8.5	10.8	7.5	7.1	10.5	10.5	14.4	11.7	7.1	11.9
General secondary programmes	8.2	4.5	5.7	6.1	6.3	6.3	4.7	7.0	3.6	7.7	6.5
SUB-TOTAL: all vocational and technical programmes	17.6	11.5	14.0	11.3	14.9	12.7	14.6	19.6	14.3	13.6	15.0
TOTAL: all programmes at secondary level	14.6	9.9	12.2	10.4	13.3	11.2	12.3	16.3	12.5	12.5	13.0

Abbreviations: LJ – Ljubljana, VE – Velenje, MB – Maribor, MS – Murska Sobota, NM – Novo Mesto, NG – Nova Gorica, KR – Kranj, KP – Koper, CE – Celje, SE – Sevnica.

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport, Employment Service – Department of Vocational Counselling

To some extent, the vocational education and training drop-out phenomenon can be explained by the gap between the aspirations of pupils to learn specific occupations and the possibility of enrolling in a programme of their choice. The motivation of young people is lower if they have not been able, because of insufficient places, to enrol in their preferred programme and they end up in another programme. Despite the lack of a detailed analysis of reasons for dropping out, data show that pupils in vocational and technical-education programmes mostly have problems with general education subjects, e.g., mathematics and the mother tongue.

2.2.8 *Post-secondary vocational education*

As a result of a thorough feasibility study and with the support of international experts from the Phare programme, the first four post-secondary vocational colleges were established immediately after the introduction of the new laws on education in the spring of 1996. Three hundred and ten young students enrolled in programmes in the first year. That same year, 80 adult students enrolled in the electrical energy programme at the ELES post-secondary vocational college. The post-secondary vocational catering and tourism college in Bled started delivering training programmes for adults in the 1997/98 school year. The results of this first experience were promising and interest in this type of study grew significantly in this sector. In 1998, a new vocational college providing catering programmes for young people was established in Maribor. Due to strong interest by employers, a new civil engineering programme for adults started on a pilot basis in Celje. The first 152 students graduated at the end of 1998.

Six post-secondary vocational colleges operated in Slovenia in the 1998/99 academic year with a total of 1,478 students. These colleges offer programmes in catering and tourism and in mechanical, electrical, electronic and civil engineering.

The number of students enrolled in post-secondary vocational colleges is still negligible compared to the number of students enrolled in higher education institutions. However, the number of post-secondary vocational colleges, the supply of post-secondary vocational programmes as well as the number of students, have been constantly increasing. It appears that post-secondary vocational education is successfully bridging the gap between secondary vocational and third-level education. This is particularly true for higher education programmes in the field of technical sciences where student interest has been declining. The number of students enrolled in post-secondary vocational colleges increased almost 3.5-fold since the first programmes were introduced, from 430 students in the 1996/97 school year to 1,478 students in 1998/99.

Table 2.16 Enrolment in post-secondary vocational colleges by field of study, grade and gender, Slovenia, 1998/99

Field of study	Total				By grade			
	Total No.	%	Women	% of women	I.		II.	
TOTAL	1,478	100.0	347	23.5	986	196	492	151
Engineering	933	63.1	40	4.3	690	36	243	4
Electronics	199	13.5	1	0.5	135	1	64	0
Electrical energy	153	10.4	1	0.7	87	0	66	1
Mechanical engineering	442	29.9	6	1.4	329	3	113	3
Civil engineering	139	9.4	32	23.0	139	32	0	0
Services trades	545	36.9	307	56.3	296	160	249	147
Catering	301	20.4	114	37.9	178	67	123	47
Tourism	244	16.5	193	79.1	118	93	126	100

Source: Statistics Office, Rapid reports, Education, No 114, April 28, 1999, Ljubljana.

2.2.9 *Higher education*

In the 1998/99 academic year, 65,550 students enrolled in undergraduate studies, representing 15.6% more than the previous academic year. If students who were about to graduate that year are added, the total number of undergraduate students rises to 76,120. The share of women students was 56.3% and of the 27,532 students who enrolled as first year students, 13,404 were new entrants. A total of 33.9% of the population aged between 19 and 23 were undergraduate level students.

Enrolments in the University of Ljubljana totalled 41,730, which represents 65.0% of all students. There were 19,621 students enrolled in the University of Maribor, 31.0% of the total and 2,814 students were enrolled in independent higher education institutions, representing 4.0% of all enrolled.

Altogether, some 43% of all students enrolled in higher professional programmes and 57% enrolled in university programmes. The percentage of women enrolled in higher professional programmes, 54.3%, was slightly lower than the percentage of women in university programmes, 59.6%.

Within higher professional programmes, almost half, 48.3%, of all students enrolled in business, administration and management courses, and next were engineering programmes at 21.8%. The percentage of those enrolled in other fields was considerably lower. The percentage of women enrolled in higher professional programmes was quite high, at 54.3%, with substantial differences by programme field. Of all those enrolled, women accounted for 96.8% in education programmes, 85.7% in medicine and health and 69.3% in services. The share of women was lowest in programmes in the fields of mathematics and computer science at15.9%.

The structure of enrolment in university programmes per different field of study was much more evenly distributed. Most students enrolled in programmes in the education field, 17.7%, business, administration and management 16.7% and engineering 11.3%. Compared to higher professional programmes, the gender structure was much more balanced but women continue to dominate in mass communication, 80.7%, education, 77.7%, and humanities programmes,77.7%. The percentage of women was lowest in mathematics and computer science programmes at 11.3%.

In the 1997/98 academic year, 2,584 students were enrolled in post-graduate studies, 4.4 % more than in 1996/97 and, of these, 49.4% were women. Ninety per cent of students enrolled for master's studies and 10% for specialisation courses. Data about the age groups of enrolled students reveal that increasing numbers of young people are deciding to continue their studies at post-graduate level. Sixty-eight per cent of all students were under 30 years of age (Education, Rapid Reports, April 28, 1999, No 114, Statistics Office).

Table 2.17 Enrolment in higher professional and university programmes by field of study, Slovenia 1998/99

Study field	Higher professional programmes		University programmes	
	% enrolment structure	% of women in a specific field	% enrolment structure	% of women in a specific field
Education	3.7	96.8	17.7	77.7
Fine and applied arts	0.1	52.4	2.8	64.0
Humanities	–	–	8.8	77.7
Religion and theology	–	–	1.1	53.2
Social sciences	–	–	9.8	66.8
Business administration and management	48.3	62.1	16.7	55.7
Law	–	–	9.1	66.5
Natural sciences	0.2	40.7	3.5	54.9
Mathematics and computer science	2.5	15.9	2.8	11.3
Medicine and health	7.9	85.7	5.3	66.3
Engineering	21.8	24.8	11.3	18.9
Architecture and urbanism	–	–	2.3	56.0
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	2.5	45.3	4.1	56.6
Transport and communication	3.3	31.8	1.1	36.7
Services trades	3.5	69.3	–	–
Mass communication	–	–	3.7	80.7
Other fields of study	6.1	54.3	–	–
TOTAL	100.0	54.3	100.0	59.6

Source: Education, Rapid Reports, April 28, 1999, No 114, Statistics Office.

Table 2.18 Student enrolment in universities and independent higher education institutions at the beginning of the 1998/99 school year

	Total 1 No.	Total 2* No.	Full-time No.	Full-time in %	Students preparing a degree thesis
TOTAL	74,642	64,072	43,654	68.1	10,570
UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA	49,289	41,730	32,002	76.7	7,559
PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	7,037	6,004	2,347	39.1	1,033
University College of Social Work	919	825	450	54.5	94
University College of Public Administration	3,484	3,244	699	21.5	240
College of Police Work and Security	679	620	161	26.0	59
University College of Healthcare	1,955	1,315	1,037	78.9	640
FACULTIES	41,394	35,032	28,967	82.7	6,362
Faculty of Arts	5,885	5,081	4,692	92.3	804
Faculty of Economics	7,956	6,854	4,281	62.5	1,102
Faculty of Law	1,982	1,704	1,143	67.1	278
Faculty of Social Sciences	3,295	2,706	2,214	81.8	589
Faculty of Sport	817	715	681	95.2	102
Faculty of Education	2,740	2,147	1,767	82.3	593
Faculty of Theology	462	413	400	96.9	49
Faculty of Electrical Engineering	1,852	1,563	1,432	91.6	289
Faculty of Mechanical Engineering	2,140	1,327	1,061	80.0	813
Faculty of Architecture	809	688	676	98.3	121
Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering	1,402	1,165	1,052	90.3	237
Faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering	1,619	1,499	1,312	87.5	120
Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Technology	1,273	1,109	1,077	97.1	164
Faculty of Mathematics and Physics	748	671	667	99.4	77
Faculty of Computer Science	1,168	1,092	1,092	100.0	76
Faculty of Marine Studies and Transport	1,690	1,612	867	53.8	78
Faculty of Biotechnology	2,969	2,448	2,315	94.6	512
Veterinary Faculty	361	305	305	100.0	56

	Total 1 No.	Total 2* No.	Full-time No.	Full-time in %	Students preparing a degree thesis
Faculty of Medicine	1,383	1,210	1,210	100.0	173
Faculty of Pharmacy	843	723	723	100.0	120
Academy of Art	858	694	688	99.1	164
Academy of Fine Arts	309	241	241	100.0	68
Academy of Music	437	361	355	98.3	76
Academy of Theatre, Film and Television	112	92	92	100.0	20
UNIVERSITY OF MARIBOR	22,539	19,621	10,647	54.3	2,918
Professional Higher Education Institutions	638	554	328	59.2	84
University College of Nursing Studies	638	554	328	59.2	84
FACULTIES	21,901	19,067	10,319	54.1	2,834
Faculty of Education	4,221	3,369	2,471	73.3	852
Faculty of Business and Economics	6,693	6,418	2,306	35.9	275
Faculty of Organisational Sciences	3,850	3,082	1,150	37.3	768
Faculty of Law	1,723	1,499	775	51.7	224
Faculty of Mechanical Engineering	1,657	1,354	1,003	74.1	303
Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering	366	330	237	71.8	36
Faculty of Civil Engineering	1,260	1,152	881	76.5	108
Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science	1,572	1,392	1,089	78.2	180
Faculty of Agriculture	559	471	407	86.4	88
INDEPENDENT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	2,814	2,721	1,005	36.9	93
College of Hotel and Travel Administration	873	780	358	45.9	93
College of Management	937	937	402	42.9	–
College of Global Entrepreneurship	350	350	90	25.7	–
Polytechnics	83	83	46	55.4	–
College of Business and Management	571	571	109	19.1	–

* *excluding students preparing a degree thesis*

Source: Education, Rapid Reports, April 28, 1999, No 114, Statistics Office.

2.3 Adaptation of vocational education and training to labour market and socio-economic change

2.3.1 Overall policy in vocational education and training

2.3.1.1 Previous developments

Educational reform, specifically targeting secondary education, was carried out throughout Yugoslavia (which included Slovenia until 1991) at the beginning of the 1980s. A model of 'Career-Oriented Education' was developed, based on the assumption that all educational programmes should lead to specific occupations. The main idea behind this reform was to reduce the cultural and social differences between the traditional gymnasium and the vocational/technical schools and to ensure that all pupils remained in contact with the labour market so as to reduce problems in finding employment after finishing school. General and vocational education at the secondary level were unified. In general, the system was school-based with periods of compulsory work practice in enterprises that were later expected to employ school graduates.

The concept of Career-Oriented Education was criticised in Slovenia from the outset and increased even further when it became apparent that the reforms were not fulfilling any of their goals. The overall quality of general education rapidly deteriorated. The reforms also reduced significantly the quality of vocational and technical education, especially the training component, and the employment opportunities of young people fell. At the end of the 1980s, the concept of Career-Oriented Education was abandoned and, after 1990, the differences between the general education and vocational/technical streams became more pronounced once more.

2.3.1.2 Reform of the education system

Discussions among experts and policy-makers about the system of education in Slovenia, which initially started as a criticism of Career-Oriented Education, continued intensively into the early 1990s and focused on the design of a new education system and the necessary reform measures. These discussions resulted in a basic consensus on the principles of a new education system for Slovenia. The new concept was formulated and published at the beginning of 1995 by the Ministry of Education and Sport in the "White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia". The White Paper was to be the basis for the overall reform of the education system in Slovenia and the policies proposed in the paper provided the basis for legislation a year later. The goals and solutions defined in the White Paper and built into the legislation were the results of the professional contributions, research and expertise from different disciplines.

The goals outlined in the White Paper were:

- to increase the participation of children in pre-school education programmes;
- to combine the existing, compulsory one-year pre-school preparation and the eight-year elementary school into a single nine-year elementary school structure and to provide the mechanisms for successful completion of elementary school for all pupils;
- to encourage the largest possible proportion of young people to enrol in general or vocational and technical secondary education;
- to improve the opportunities of transfer between different categories in the education system;
- to improve functional and cultural literacy among adults and to increase the scope of adult education;

- to organise additional activities for children from culturally and socially disadvantaged environments;
- to ensure equal opportunities for both sexes, at all levels of the education system; and
- to increase opportunities for the care and education of children with special needs.

The new legal framework of the present education system, based on principles of democracy, autonomy and equal opportunities, was adopted in Slovenia in 1996. It comprises a set of six acts all of which were adopted in February 1996: the Organisation and Funding of Education Act, the Pre-school Institutions Act, the Elementary School Act, the Gymnasiums Act, the Vocational and Technical Education Act and the Adult Education Act. A special feature of the new legislation is the gradual introduction of changes and the simultaneous provision of material and personnel as well as financial resources to implement the changes. The new legal framework for the higher education system was introduced by the end of 1993 and came into force at the beginning of 1994. The basic principle of the Higher Education Act is the autonomy of universities and other higher education institutions. In line with this principle, the Act deregulates education provision so as to ensure autonomy, public accountability, equality of opportunity, integrity of research and teaching, and the opening up opportunities for the establishment of public and private higher education institutions.

2.3.1.3 *Reform of vocational education and training*

In the field of vocational education and training, the most important legislative document is the Vocational and Technical Education Act, and for adult education the Adult Education Act. With these two acts and the Organisation and Funding of Education Act, vocational education and training has been covered in full and the conditions for developing a new vocational education and training system have been put in place. The new legislation specifies the establishment and operating principles for the **Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education** and the **Council of Experts for Adult Education (the two highest expert bodies responsible for adopting changes and introducing innovations into the vocational education and training system)**. In addition, the **Centre for Vocational Education and Training (CPI) was established at the end of 1995** with the aim of supporting and facilitating the reform and development of vocational education and training in Slovenia.

In addition to the general principles of education reform, the legislation also seeks to effect other specific improvements in the vocational education and training system.

- The vocational education and training system should be better adapted to the needs of the labour market, to changes in the world of work and developments in the economy. The links between school and the world of work should be strengthened. This should be achieved by introducing new types of vocational education with a strong practical dimension and practical training in enterprises, i.e., the apprenticeship system and post-secondary vocational colleges. The curricula of existing vocational education and training programmes should be constantly reviewed and updated and employers permanently involved in both the provision of training and in decision-making processes in vocational education and training. Also, the structure of the vocational education and training system is to become more diversified with alternative pathways leading to the same occupational qualification and different transition options. All of these should help in the transition from school to work.
- Social partnership is strongly emphasised at all levels of vocational education and training, in decision-making processes on vocational education and training related issues and in the implementation of vocational education and training reform measures. This partnership is to a large extent formalised and institutionalised, so that representatives of employers and employees

are obliged to become members of decision-making bodies and expert and working groups set up to propose decisions and implement vocational education and training reform measures.

- The vocational education and training system must retain and reinforce comparability with European vocational education and training systems in terms of standards of knowledge, training practice, the involvement of employers, international co-operation among schools, international exchanges of experience etc. This is essential to prepare the Slovenian workforce for the increasing demands of competition on the labour market and to develop a labour force that is compatible and competitive with labour forces in European Union countries in terms of standards of education and qualification as well as in terms of flexibility.

The following are the four main of the new legislation.

- **New forms of vocational education must be implemented**, including:
    - the dual system of in-school theoretical education and in-company practical training - with schools responsible for the theoretical part of the programme while employers are responsible for training - which is intended as an alternative to the existing secondary school-based vocational programmes;
    - vocational courses, designed as six-month to one-year courses for graduates of general secondary schools and, parallel to this, Matura courses for secondary technical programme graduates who would like to continue education at universities;
    - post-secondary vocational programmes, including two-year non-university programmes with a strong practical orientation;
    - master craftsmen, foremen and managerial courses and examinations; and
    - professionally-oriented gymnasiums, which are part of the general education stream.
- **There should be a review of all existing vocational education programmes** with the aim of modernising curricula and adapting them to labour market needs, economic change and European standards as well as the development of new vocational education and training programmes.
- **Teacher/trainer training and equipment of vocational and professional schools should be enhanced and speeded up.**
- **More emphasis must be put on certification as a framework for continuing education.** The certification system aims to promote continuing vocational training, specialisation and a broadening of qualifications which cannot be gained through regular school-based programmes. It also aims to help less-educated employees and the unemployed acquire basic vocational qualifications. However, the certification system is not designed to act as an alternative to the regular school system.

2.3.1.4 Social partnership in vocational education and training

One of the main priorities of the Government within the reform of the vocational education and training system has been to encourage social partnership and to transfer part of the responsibilities for the system to the partners, especially employers. The involvement of the social partners is institutionalised and formalised through new legislation introduced in 1996.

Social partners participate in all the main expert and working groups in the field of vocational education and training at national and regional levels. At national level, the Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education and the Council of Experts for Adult Education, were appointed by the Government on a tripartite basis. The social partners also participate in the

National Committee for the Introduction and Monitoring of Innovations and Programmes in Education and its evaluation committees both for vocational and technical education as well as for adult education.

The Centre for Vocational Education and Training, which is expected to become the main development, counselling and co-ordination body in vocational education and training, was founded in 1995 jointly by the Ministry of Education and Sport, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Crafts. Representatives of all these institutions are also members of the Centre's Steering Committee. Another institution managed on a tripartite basis is the Employment Service, led by a tripartite Administrative Council, which – in the field of vocational education and training – is responsible for its vocational training programmes and retraining programmes for unemployed and redundant workers.

According to the provisions of the Vocational and Technical Education Act (1996), the chambers have a number of responsibilities in vocational education and training. On the one hand, they suggest occupations and provide the basic standards for which new vocational education and training programmes are to be prepared. They also take a permanent part in the process of reviewing and updating curricula. On the other hand, the chambers have a number of responsibilities related to the training component of vocational and technical programmes and examinations in some types of vocational education and training (verifying and monitoring training places, monitoring and co-ordinating practical parts of examinations, preparing and organising master craftsmen and foremen examinations etc.). In practice, the chambers – as well as individual employers – are becoming increasingly involved in vocational education and training developments at different levels. This also applies to the development of different forms of local and regional co-operation between schools and employers.

The explicit responsibilities of trade unions in vocational education and training are limited to a protective and monitoring role: monitoring apprenticeship contracts, ensuring the rights of apprentices are respected and participating in the examinations monitoring committees. In practice, trade unions are still insufficiently involved in vocational education and training developments and are only slowly starting to show an interest in strengthening their influence in this area. It seems that they still view their main role as the fight for higher wages, better working conditions and other issues directly linked to the employment and socio-economic situation of workers.

Under the Phare programme for the reconstruction of vocational education and training in Slovenia, an idea was launched to develop a social partnership model in vocational education and training at regional level. Four regions were selected at the beginning of 1997 – Gorenjska, Podravje, Zasavje and Savinjsko-Šaleška – where pilot Regional Vocational Education and Training Councils were established. In 1999 only the Velenje and Maribor Regional Vocational Education and Training Councils were active and, overall, the opportunities for action by Regional Vocational Education and Training Councils are very limited. An effective link between economic development and vocational education and training can only be established if a legal basis exists and sufficient funds are made available to operate these partnership-based bodies for vocational education and training.

2.3.2 *Special aspects of vocational education and training*

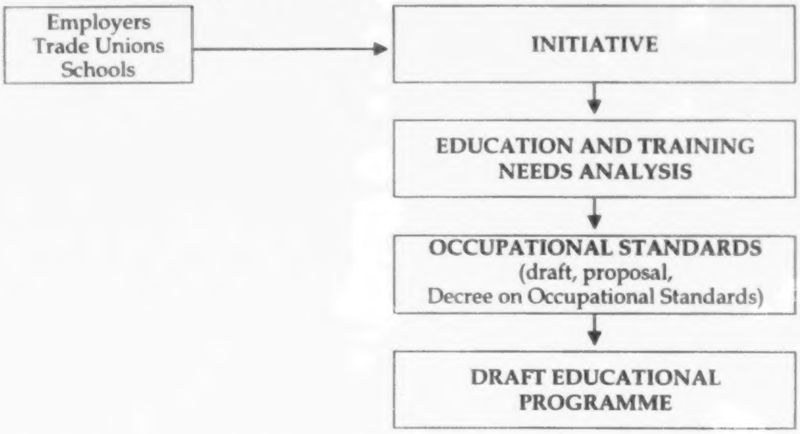
2.3.2.1 *The development of national standards and analyses of training needs*

The Vocational and Technical Education Act (1996) is the legal basis for the definition of occupational standards. It specifies that occupational standards are the basis for developing programmes for officially recognised qualifications. Standards are developed by the chambers or ministries and published by the Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. The Act also forms the basis for the Occupational Standards Decree.

An important innovation introduced by this Act is the role of the social partners in the process of developing occupational standards. According to the terms of the Act, **the most important parties involved in the development of occupational standards are the chambers or, in areas where chambers are not organised, the relevant sectoral ministries**.

In 1997, a group of experts composed of all the social partners and appointed by the Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs developed a methodology for the definition of occupational standards. The Minister approved the methodology. A special methodology for defining proficiency levels for occupations was also developed

Chart 2.1 The process of the development of occupational standards in Slovenia


Employers
Trade Unions
Schools
INITIATIVE
EDUCATION AND TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS
OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS (draft, proposal, Decree on Occupational Standards)
DRAFT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

All initiatives for the development of occupational standards are centralised both by the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, where records of all initiatives are kept, and in the relevant chambers or ministries, where they are analysed and reviewed professionally. Initiatives usually stem from employers with only a few of them originating from schools and trade unions.

The chambers identify the need for new programmes or propose solutions to deal with a specific problem, e.g., the certification system. Initiatives to date have been mainly related to post-secondary vocational education, followed by those related to secondary vocational and technical education. Some existing programmes, mostly short-term vocational programmes, were abolished on the initiative of employers as the jobs for which training was being provided no longer existed. There have also been initiatives to merge related programmes with the aim of providing broader general knowledge and skills and, therefore, a more flexible workforce. These initiatives have been given careful consideration and some programmes have already been adapted accordingly. Others are still in the process of preparation.

Occupational standards are due to be prepared on the basis of skills or training needs analyses. However, they have not yet been prepared because training needs analyses are an innovation introduced by the Decree on Occupational Standards. There are several activities and projects under way in Slovenia which aim to develop the appropriate methodologies to carry out training needs analyses. These analyses should provide data on the current situation and planned development of a given sector at national and international levels and data on occupations within the sector. They should also provide information on the labour market situation, skills requirements and trends as well as training supply and demand. A forecast of the likely developments within the sector, both in terms of technological and human resource needs, should enable the development of future-oriented occupational standards as well as skills and knowledge standards.

Until now, labour market needs have been analysed in a fairly systematic way mainly by the Employment Service. Some information is also available at a regional level but, unfortunately, is not used in a way that is appropriate to forecasting skills or training needs.

Data collected by the Employment Service Employment Survey include:

- data on employment in the previous year and subsequent year by education level;
- data on planned retirements and contractual and overtime work;
- data on planned employment and internships by vocational qualification;
- data on employed disabled people;
- data on the shortage of workers with specific vocational qualifications; and
- the number and characteristics of redundant workers and ways of solving the problem.

One of the weaknesses of the Employment Service's Employment Survey is that **the information collected fails to provide an effective mechanism to assess skills or training requirements**. The survey does not specify whether employers, for instance, intend to fill vacancies nor does it provide information on the skills required for the jobs in question. Formal qualifications, especially when they have been acquired some years previously, are often insufficient to qualify for certain jobs.

Regular training needs analyses are carried out by the Human Resources Development Fund in Maribor in the Podravje Region. The main task of the Human Resources Development Fund has been to systematically analyse the training needs of different target groups and use them to plan and stimulate the development of modern, flexible, short-term programmes at the regional level. This should enable greater mobility of people in different circumstances. Information collected through the survey is used as a basis for designing a common and integrated strategy on training development in the Podravje region in general as well as for different target groups.

The Human Resources Development Fund also analyses skills and knowledge required by companies, identifies existing skills gaps and discrepancies in training supply and demand, analyses development strategies and businesses' human resources development plans and puts forward recommendations for further regional development. The National Vocational Education and Training Observatory Slovenia and the Human Resources Development Fund are participating jointly in a Leonardo da Vinci project on monitoring labour market needs.

Under a 1998 project funded by the European Training Foundation, methodology for a sectoral survey was developed and piloted in the chemistry sector. Special questionnaires were designed to interview both middle management and practitioners in a given occupation.

Occupational standards are defined by groups of experts appointed by the relevant chambers or ministries. All experts are specially trained on how to draft occupational standards. Special emphasis is also placed on the methodology for determining proficiency levels.

As mentioned above, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training supervises the review and development of standards. This means that the Centre ensures that standards are both developed in accordance with the methodology agreed with the social partners and approved by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. The same occupational standards are used for the dual system and school-based vocational education and training system.

The Committee for Occupational Standards reviews all standards. The Committee is composed of representatives from the chambers, trade unions, the Ministry of Education and Sport, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Statistics Office, the Employment Service and the Faculty of Social Sciences. During the review process, the Committee must take into consideration education and training needs analyses, international comparability of occupational standards and European

Union regulations on specific occupational areas. All agreed occupational standards are presented to the Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education.

According to the agreed methodology, occupational standards include the following:

- specific tasks within the occupation in question;
- the proficiency level of the occupations in question;
- the title of occupations for which an individual with a specific educational aptitude is qualified, based on the Standard Classification of Occupations;
- the occupational code (based on the Standard Classification of Occupations;
- professional knowledge and skills required for effective performance;
- education qualification; and
- educational level.

A total of 87 occupational standards covering short-term to post-secondary vocational education programme levels have been agreed on and officially announced since 1997.

Table 2.19 Officially announced occupational standards by level of education at the end of 1999

Level of education	Number
Short-term vocational education	15
Secondary vocational education	36
Secondary technical education	22
Post-secondary vocational education	14
TOTAL	87

Source: Centre for Vocational Education and Training.

In addition, the Council of Experts for Vocational Education and Training has already expressed its opinion on 21 new occupational standards. In some cases additional negotiations are required mostly regarding the Standard Classification of Occupations. A total of 214 occupational standards need to be prepared, including those that have already been prepared, for the entire vocational education and training system. However, the number is constantly increasing because new initiatives are emerging.

There is also a need to evaluate the methodology used to set occupational standards. A questionnaire was sent to experts who had already co-operated in defining occupational standards. The main aim of this evaluation is to assess the appropriateness of the methodology and the scope for improvement in terms of:

- the roles, responsibilities and competencies of the institutions involved, on the basis of the principle of social partnership;
- the use by experts of existing sources of information and/or the identification of new sources; and
- the drafting of occupational standards.

Additional training for experts preparing occupational standards will also be needed.

2.3.2.2 *Curriculum development*

The reform of curricula for short-term vocational, secondary vocational and technical programmes as well as post-secondary vocational programmes, was initially undertaken in the framework of the Phare programme. The work covered secondary vocational/dual-system programmes, vocational courses and post-secondary vocational programmes, and the preparation of examination syllabuses for master craftsmen, foremen and managerial examinations. Altogether 19 new vocational and technical programmes were prepared under the Phare programme including 8 secondary vocational/dual system programmes, 5 vocational course programmes, 5 post-secondary vocational programmes and 1 secondary technical programme. The new curricula prepared under the Phare programme represent slightly less than one-quarter of all the updated vocational and technical programmes in the 1996-1999 period.

Table 2.20 New and updated short-term secondary vocational, technical and post-secondary vocational education programmes in the 1996-1999 period

Education programmes by level of education	1996/97 school year	1997/98 school year	1998/99 school year	1999/2000 school year	Total	Preparation for 2000/2001
Short-term vocational education			15		15	2
Secondary vocational education/dual system		8 *	12**	8**	28	8
Secondary vocational education/school-based system			3	1	4	9
Secondary technical education			5	11	16	6
Vocational-technical education			1		1	5
Vocational courses	5			1	6	
Post-secondary vocational education	5		1	5	11	2
TOTAL	10	8	37	26	81	42

*Notes: * no enrolment in two programmes, ** no enrolment in five programmes.*

Source: Centre for Vocational Education and Training.

During the period from 1996–1999, over half of all vocational and technical programmes, from short-term to post-secondary education level, were updated. In addition, in 1998, the Minister of Education and Sport extended the validity of 70 existing secondary vocational and technical programmes for two years through the Decree on Extending the Validity of Education Programmes in Secondary Vocational and Technical Education (Official Gazette No 51, July 17, 1998). These programmes will need to be updated in the year 2000. At the end of 1999, a total of 81 vocational and technical programmes had been updated or prepared from scratch. Among these, secondary vocational/dual-system programmes represented over one-third of all programmes. Since the so-called craft programmes, which were transformed into dual-system programmes, were given priority in the curricula reform, the majority of school-based secondary vocational programmes still need to be updated. Apart from these, a number of secondary technical and vocational-technical programmes also need to be updated. Until now most attention and efforts have been focused on updating and/or preparing new short-term vocational programmes, secondary vocational/dual system programmes, vocational course programmes and post-secondary vocational programmes.

All short-term vocational programmes have been updated and students were given the opportunity to enrol in them for the 1998/99 school year. One of the key questions remaining in the further process of curricula reform in vocational and technical education is whether it is also necessary to establish school-based vocational programme alternatives for all occupations for which dual-system programmes exist.

The National Curriculum Council and curriculum committees for different types of education, including the Curriculum Committee for Vocational and Technical Education, have ceased operation since the beginning of 1999. The Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education now deals with remaining or newly emerging issues related to curricula. At the end of 1998, the **National Committee for the Introduction and Monitoring of Innovations and Programmes in Education** was established. In 1999, it appointed three 'evaluation' subcommittees for vocational and technical education, general education and adult education, respectively.

2.3.2.3 *Assessment and certification*

The Decree on Final Examinations in Short-term and Secondary Vocational Education (Official Gazette, No 102/17.12.1999) specifies the following assessment, testing, accreditation and certification procedures for occupational qualifications.

- Final examinations are carried out by an Examination Board.
- Final examinations for specific elements of theoretical/professional components are carried out by Examination Commissions.
- The practical part of final examinations are carried out by the National Examination Commissions.
- The candidate must complete all tasks within a programme before registering for the assessment procedure.
- The final examination is carried out for subjects included in the educational programme.
- The terms of final examinations are specified by schools and are published.
- In the dual system, the terms for the practical parts of final examinations are specified by chambers in agreement with the schools.
- The Examination Board determines the form examination work will take.
- The final examination themes must fall within the context of the programme and remain secret until the beginning of the examination.
- The final examination starts with an introduction to the whole procedure explained to the candidates by the chairman of the Examination Board or the Examination Commission.
- Candidates can only take one written or two oral sessions of the final examination or one practical session of the examination per day.
- As a rule, the final examination starts with the written part, which lasts from 90 to 120 minutes.
- For the oral part of the examination, assessors must prepare a list of questions and cards comprising three questions from the list. Each committee has to have 30 cards at its disposal or 5 more than the number of candidates. The candidate can change the selected card once. The candidate has 20 minutes to prepare the answer(s).
- The practical part of the final examination starts with an introduction to the examination procedure which is explained to the candidate by the chairman of the Examination Board or the

Examination Commission. The practical examination lasts from 4 to a maximum 23 hours, with no more than 7 hours/day.

- When a candidate does not comply with the examination rules, he/she can be warned once. He/she can excluded from the examination after a second warning.
- Grading standards and rules are specified in examination syllabuses.
- The final grade of the examination depends on the grades for different parts of the final examination. The grades range from 1 to 5.
- The candidate is entitled to see examination records.
- A candidate who successfully passes the final examination or part of the final examination will receive a diploma or certificate issued by the school and/or chamber.
- If a candidate feels that the final examination procedure was incorrect, he/she can refer his/her complaint, accompanied by an explanation, to the school or competent chamber.

The Decree on Final Examinations in short-term and secondary vocational education differs from the previous decree mostly in the procedures laid down for the practical part of the final examination. The introduction to the dual system stipulates how this is to be carried out by employers and the relevant chambers responsible for the organisation and execution of the practical part of the examination.

Examination syllabuses are a feature of every educational programme. The procedure and duration of the final examination is clearly explained in the syllabuses. They are prepared only for subjects that are part of the final examination. In short-term vocational education, the subjects required for the final examinations are:

- the Slovenian language; and
- practical training.

In secondary vocational programmes the required subjects are:

- the Slovenian language,
- a basic technical subject, which varies according to the programme; and
- practical training.

In secondary technical education programmes, four subjects are required for the examination:

- the Slovenian language;
- either mathematics or a foreign language, at the candidate's discretion;
- a basic technical subject, which varies according to the programme; and
- practical training in which the candidate can choose between a product/service and project work in which he/she must prove his/her ability to combine theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

Examinations for general subjects, i.e., the Slovenian language, mathematics and a foreign language, are both written and oral. For basic technical subjects, examinations are generally oral.

There is an urgent need for the development and implementation of a system of certification for adults and that vocational qualifications be awarded through certification after a final examination. All the social partners, particularly employers, have expressed the need for such a system on several occasions in the past because of the gap between the skills required at the workplace and the skills and knowledge acquired through formal education programmes.

Certificates obtained through this system will not have the same value as certificates acquired through formal school education programmes, but will complement them. Adults who want to acquire formal qualifications would still have the option of enrolling in the part-time study programmes offered by various schools.

The required proof of occupational qualification could be provided in two ways:

- through direct assessment of the skills and knowledge set down in the officially defined occupational standards, or
- on the basis of certificates acquired through the formal education system or other means.

A certificate alone would not entitle the holder to continue education in formal education programmes. This could only be guaranteed after the preparation and establishment of a system of comparison and equivalence between the formal education system and the standard of skills and knowledge acquired in the certification system.

The Act on Changes and Amendments to the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act (1998) stipulates the standards of knowledge and competencies to be acquired and in this way provides the legal basis for developing standards. Unfortunately, this is valid only for the unemployed. Based on amendments to this Act, a Decree on the Procedure for the Acquisition of Vocational Qualifications was issued in June 1999 by the Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. The Act on the Certification System is currently being prepared.

The Decree on the Procedure for the Acquisition of Vocational Qualifications specifies that the following elements are required in a certification system:

- the title of the qualification standard for skills and knowledge;
- the occupational knowledge and skills required for effective performance;
- the methods of assessment of occupational knowledge and skills;
- the measures for assessment;
- special conditions for candidates seeking to acquire a vocational qualification;
- the occupation for which the candidate is qualified by acquiring an occupational qualification;
- the proficiency level; and
- special arrangements for disabled people.

These elements should enable comparisons to be made with the occupational standards of the formal education system. Both sets of standards are based on the Standard Classification of Occupations and the same methodology is used to set proficiency levels. Both sets of standards are prepared on demand from, and experts appointed by employers and reflect their current needs and situations. In both cases, their work is based on occupational profiles. Both methodologies allow standards to be adjusted to meet new demands.

Standards will be recognised at the national level and so will guarantee a degree of flexibility for holders of certificates in different working environments, thereby broadening their possibilities for employability.

The Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education is responsible for standards of skills and knowledge. If the Council decides that a proposed standard, such as a vocational qualification, is already covered by an education qualification acquired through a formal education programme, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, in its role as co-ordinator, will co-ordinate work on re-developing standards.

The draft methodology for the development of standards of skills and knowledge has been developed by the Centre for Vocational Education and Training and will require testing through a number of pilot projects. It is expected that the methodology will change and develop based on the results of the pilot projects. This could be carried out within the framework of the Phare Modernisation of Curricula, Certification and Assessment programme. At present, the methodology for the development of standards of skills and knowledge identifies 3 kinds of vocational qualifications within the certification system:

- vocational qualifications for narrow spheres of work and for occupations requiring a low level of proficiency;
- vocational qualifications for broadening and upgrading education acquired in formal education programmes; and
- vocational qualifications acquired by completing modules of programmes within the formal education system.

2.3.2.4 *Recognition and transparency of qualifications*

The comparability of vocational qualifications is a pre-condition for putting into practice the principle of recognition of occupational qualifications, in the absence of the adjustment of education and training systems on a European Union-wide scale. This can be achieved only if qualifications and occupational standards are transparent. Occupational standards are defined in a special document, based on the Act on Vocational and Technical Education, combining the worlds of work and education. As such, it provides the basis for developing educational programmes.

The basis for defining occupations and their codes within a system of occupational standards is the Standard Classification of Occupations, which was drawn up by the Statistics Office in co-operation with the Employment Service and the social partners. It was adjusted to the International Standard Classification of Occupations - ISCO 88 and ISCO 88 (COM) which served as the basis for the terminology used and also provided a means of sorting occupations into major groups, subgroups and minor groups. Occupations in the Standard Classification of Occupations are classified according to skill level and skill specialisation. This is certainly one of the main mechanisms to enable the transferability of occupational qualifications.

The other main document dealing with occupational qualifications is the official education programme, in particular the general part concerning enrolment criteria, the duration of schooling, assessment approaches to test knowledge and skills, and the education qualification obtained on completion of a specific programme. The programme also contains important information concerning the transferability of qualifications, the curriculum and length of practical training, inventories of skills and knowledge, examination syllabuses and teacher and trainer requirements.

Both documents are prepared by the relevant social partners under the procedure laid down in the Act on Vocational and Technical Education or decrees based on this Act. These documents are, after negotiation by the social partners, endorsed by the relevant ministers - the Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs for occupational standards and the Minister of Education and Sport for the educational programmes. Both documents outlined above have to be officially announced and made accessible to the public.

The contents of both documents are intended to facilitate the transparency of vocational qualifications, the acquisition of vocational or technical education and professional skills and knowledge.

A job description is one of the instruments which allow comparisons to be made of qualifications in different countries. Combined with education and training needs analyses, job descriptions are an important basis for setting occupational standards and standards of skills and knowledge.

The certification system is still in the process of being developed. The social partners are currently preparing the legal framework in connection with the work being piloted on standards of skills and knowledge. In this way, an evaluation and further development of the methodology for setting standards will be carried out. The Phare Modernisation of Curricula, Certification and Assessment programme aims to develop a methodology that will be adapted to the methodologies used in European Union countries and the contents on skills and knowledge standards should allow discretion about transparency. This will ensure that skills and knowledge standards in Slovenia, together with vocational qualifications gained through life, work experience and other informal ways of learning, will be transparent.

The instruments that would allow a comparison of qualifications between different countries need to be developed. In this way, both the Vocational Education System and the Certification System would be based on internationally comparable methodologies, the experience of different European Union countries in this field and, in addition, on internationally comparable occupational standards. Constant changes in the working environment and changes in the needs of employers are requiring changes to be made in occupational standards and, as a result, changes in educational programmes. Methodologies must allow this kind of flexibility. This would guarantee transparency for Slovenia's occupational standards throughout Europe. However, national characteristics should not be excluded, otherwise the diversity of different nationalities and traditions and the national richness of different countries could be threatened.

One attempt to allow transparency in qualifications is the 'diploma supplement', which should ease the process of recognition of diplomas and certificates. The pilot Diploma Supplement study, a joint project with the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEEPUS, follows from the Lisbon Convention and is issued together with diplomas. Slovenia has participated in the project with the support of the Phare programme and it is currently participating in the latest international project on this issue, the EUROCERT project, under the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

When addressing the question of free movement of workers between countries, the issue of providing foreign workers with access to regulated professions also arises. The minimum requirement for employment in Slovenia is a work permit, issued by the Employment Service, which is a prerequisite for issuing a work visa. A work permit is issued only if there are no Slovenian candidates applying for the job in question and the applicant meets the employer's terms and conditions.

The mutual recognition of certificates and diplomas acquired, for example, through education and training abroad can be achieved through bilateral international agreements. Slovenia has concluded agreements with almost all neighbouring countries and many others. However, these agreements usually concern the recognition of higher professional or university diplomas and not vocational education and training certificates.

Challenges in the field of recognising vocational qualifications

The conclusions of a workshop held in Slovenia in 1999 on the issue of "Recognition of vocational qualifications" are reproduced below. The workshop aimed to address the challenges Slovenia faces in this field.

1. The main conclusion was that any international recognition of qualifications required a high degree of transparency of the national system of qualifications. This means there can be no external transparency without internal transparency. An inventory of so-called regulated professions made a substantial contribution to increasing national transparency but this has not been an easy task and much remains to be done. In this context, a working group has been set up within the Ministry of Labour to analyse existing regulations on the different professions as well as those provisions laying down the conditions/elements of regulation which are likely to pose problems in terms of the process of approximation.

2. It was stressed that the European Union system for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, as established by the two general Directives (89/48, 92/51), does not require as a prerequisite the harmonisation of the national education and training systems of the Member States.

   The European Union system is based on the principle of mutual trust between national systems of education and training and it aims to remove the legal obstacles to the professional mobility of European Union nationals. Criteria such as nationality or language may not be imposed as formal requirements for those who wish to practice a profession in a host Member State.

   There are a number of reasons that can lead a country to regulate access to and the practice of certain professions. The most frequent among these relate to concerns about health, safety, the environment and public order and also the labour market situation, economic traditions and the interests of specific professional groups.

   However, regulated access and the practice of certain professions should be distinguished from the process of regulating access to different forms and levels of education. This distinction is important to bear in mind so as to understand better the scope of the European Union Directives, which is the recognition of qualifications for professional and not educational purposes.

3. In terms of what could be called "internal transparency", there appears to be four major obstacles currently in place.

   - Overall, there is high level of regulation in the Slovenian qualification system. There is a great diversity in the institutions involved, including different ministries, chambers and social partners. They all have their own particular interest but they differ considerably in terms of their capacity to provide information. This division of responsibilities is not very transparent.

   - The various educational subsystems have developed their own institutional arrangements. Secondary general, secondary vocational, post-secondary non-university and academic higher education do not form part of a complete comprehensive system of qualifications. Most adult and continuing vocational education and training programmes do not provide any recognised qualifications at all.

   - The Slovenian education and training systems are undergoing a process of modernisation and reform, particularly the fields of initial and continuing vocational education and training and are still faced with a series of unsolved problems.

   - Existing educational and occupational classification systems are being reformed. National classifications (SKP, Nomenklatura) have to be brought into line with international systems (ISCED, ISCO, SEDOC/CEDEFOP). This requires understanding and agreement on levels and comparability among representatives of education, employment and statistical services.

4. These issues need to be tackled with a view to developing a much higher degree of internal transparency than exists today.

5. However, it has also become clear that efforts to improve "external transparency" can act as a catalyst that could also greatly facilitate and enhance internal transparency. As in many other countries, these are mutually reinforcing developments. However, this would assume that the various experiences with different forms of recognition within the European Union would become available for more systematic policy development nationally. More specifically, this would imply an assessment and understanding of the different approaches used in the recognition of qualifications in the European Union over time, as these reflect the changing nature of relations between Member States and the European Commission in the field of education. The aim here should not be to copy these approaches but to draw on them in order to develop an approach tailored to the specific needs and situation of the country. The various initiatives developed during the last few years at the European level point to the value of some key factors for **reinforcing mutual understanding and trust between the different education and training systems** through, for instance:

   - building up appropriate information sources and mechanisms on training and qualifications;
   - developing some common guidelines to improve the quality of the systems;
   - establishing transnational networks for the exchange of information; and
   - experimenting with bottom-up initiatives to promote the voluntary convergence of training content and methods.

   At a more technical level, there is a need to **make good use of existing experience in Member countries through the implementation of the *"acquis communautaire"* in the fields of education and training**.

   It is also important to participate in European networks that have been set up to exchange information and experience concerning different forms of education. This would mean, in particular, an extension of international co-operation with regard to vocational education and training.

6. In concrete terms, the recommendations which follow can therefore be made.

   - The situation should be clarified, with regard to arrangements at all levels of education, concerning the national and international recognition of qualifications for further education and training, on the one hand, and for taking up employment, on the other.
   - There is a need to improve inter-ministerial co-operation in the on-going process of development of new classification systems in both the educational and occupational spheres.
   - More co-operation and coherence should be established between the various institutions working in Slovenia at different levels of education. Experience shows that the close involvement of professional organisations makes a positive contribution to improving transparency both at national and European level.
   - Access to information about Slovenian qualifications should be improved, nationally and internationally, e.g., by establishing a national information centre.
   - Partnerships with European Union Member States should be established for the technical implementation of Framework Directives.
   - Slovenian experts should participate in European networks working on issues related to the recognition of qualifications, such as those established by the European Training Foundation and the Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP).

- With regard to the main tasks in the pre-accession process in the field of regulated professions and drawing on the relevant experience in the Member States, the following points were highlighted during the discussions:
  - the need to define regulated professions more precisely and also the relevant level of education;
  - the need to establish a list of the authorities competent to regulate each of these professions;
  - the advantage of preparing a framework law which would transpose European Union norms to the national legal system and abolishing or amending all previous provisions which do not comply with these norms;
  - the need to decide on an institution which would play a key co-ordinating role and ensure the homogeneous implementation of the Directives at national level as well as to serve as a central contact point for providing access to information as regards implementation; and
  - the need to have a comparative overview and systematic exchange of information about the regulated professions in the various European Union and candidate countries.

2.3.2.5 *Teacher training and trainer training*

Parliament adopted both the Organisation and Funding of Education Act and the Vocational and Technical Education Act in 1996, which opened up new educational possibilities, programmes and contents for vocational education and training. Increased emphasis on practical skills in vocational programmes re-opens the question of initial, pre-service training and continuing, in-service training for teachers in technical/theoretical subjects and teachers providing practical training and skills.

Pre-service teacher training

Pre-service education of secondary teachers teaching general subjects is delivered via four-year university programmes. These programmes are mostly delivered in one subject area or two subject areas in parallel programmes. In addition, student teachers intending to teach general subjects also acquire pedagogical qualifications. On completing their studies, graduates obtain a diploma mentioning the title 'Professor' for one or two general subjects. No separate pre-service studies are organised for secondary school teachers teaching technical/theoretical and practical-training/skills subjects. Teachers teaching technical/theoretical subjects are usually recruited from university graduates with several years work experience. They then take additional teacher training course, which finally qualifies them to teach their subjects in secondary vocational and technical schools. Teachers teaching practical training and skills are usually recruited from graduates who have completed at least a four-year secondary technical school, have at least three years' work experience and have completed the required teacher training or successfully passed a master craftsmen, foremen or managerial examination.

At the beginning of their teaching careers, all teachers have an obligatory trial period lasting from six to ten months, which concludes with a state examination. Taking the state examination is a prerequisite for permanent employment as a teacher. Secondary school teachers are mostly employed on a permanent, full-time basis.

Initial teacher training is provided entirely by universities, consisting of faculties and higher professional institutions.

All graduates who have not acquired this kind of education and who would like to teach in short-term and secondary vocational and technical programme schools, can enrol in a relevant publicly financed skills upgrading course. Officially recognised courses for acquiring these skills are provided by the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Education of the University of Ljubljana and the

Faculty of Education of the University of Maribor. A special programme, which is currently in a pilot phase, has been prepared for post-secondary vocational school teachers in order to obtain the necessary teacher training skills.

In-service teacher training

In-service training of primary and secondary education teachers has been a long-standing tradition in Slovenia. Legislation on education and agreement by the public authorities ensure at least 5 days of in-service training for each teacher per year. The Minister of Education and Sport publishes calls for proposals to carry out and co-finance in-service teacher training programmes every year and the Department for In-Service Teacher Training within the National Education Institute processes applications from potential providers. Programmes for the vocational education and training area are also offered by the Centre for Vocational Education and Training and are based on identified needs. The identification of training needs for vocational school teachers is one of the activities carried out by the Centre on a regular annual basis. However, any registered institution, enterprise or individual training provider carrying out educational activities may offer programmes.

The Programme Committee for in-service training selects the proposed programmes. The Minister for Education and Sport appoints this Committee. All selected programmes are published in the Directory of Permanent and Professional Training Programmes for Teachers. The directory is updated annually. In-service teacher training programmes are partly financed by the Ministry of Education and Sport. The Programme Committee for in-service training is obliged to evaluate the programmes in terms of financing and in terms of what teachers gain through participating in a particular course, seminar or workshop.

The system of in-service teacher/trainer training in Slovenia is the same for all teachers from pre-school institutions to post-secondary vocational colleges, which also includes teachers and trainers in the field of vocational and technical education. Attendance at skills upgrading courses is a pre-condition for the promotion of teachers and trainers employed in educational institutions.

Because of the specific characteristics of vocational and technical education, programmes for teachers of technical/theoretical subjects to acquire pedagogical qualifications, for mentors of apprentices and teachers of practical training and skills subjects to acquire basic pedagogical knowledge, and programmes for education managers are all now a part of the in-service teacher/trainer training system.

Recent debates on reform and likely developments in the field of vocational education and training teacher/trainer training

The implementation of the education and training reform has revealed the importance of teacher education and training. The fact that there is no special vocational education and training-oriented system of teacher/trainer training is viewed as a serious deficiency of the system. Discussions and activities to put in place a separate training system for vocational school teachers and trainers started in 1997. The Centre for Vocational Education and Training prepared some guidelines to design a new system. They were presented to the main teacher/trainer training and decision-making bodies at a small conference that took place in March 1998, and are now under discussion.

In general, it appears necessary to redefine the relationship between pre-service and in-service teacher training, as the latter, in particular, needs to respond in a more flexible way to the changing demands of society and the economy. In-service training should no longer be viewed as a form of compensation to make up for the deficiencies of pre-service teacher training, but as an independent system promoting the personal and professional development of teachers.

In-service training should aim to underpin lifelong learning practices and develop the professional skills of teachers and trainers to be more innovative, more aware of developments, particularly in Europe, and to make use of good practice developed in vocational education and training elsewhere.

Currently a number of activities are taking place within the framework of the Phare Modernisation of Curricula, Certification and Assessment programme. A new proposal for a pre-service and in-service teacher training system in the field of vocational education and training is being designed. There are plans to develop three specific teacher training modules:

- a module which would be part of the current programme for acquiring pedagogical qualifications to be updated and pilot-tested in selected schools;
- a module for the training of teacher trainers or tutors in vocational and technical education with the intention that those who take this module will, in turn, act as tutors for colleagues; and
- a module of new methodologies to be applied to adult vocational education and training.

3. Human resource development

3.1 Continuing training

3.1.1 Adult education – background and future development

At the beginning of the 1990s, when the reform of the education system was under discussion, adult education came to be recognised as equal in importance and status to the initial education of young people. It was realised that adult education is not only a second chance for some individuals but that it is, within the context of a lifelong learning strategy, on a par with the education of youth and thus an equal component of the education system. This was clearly stated in the 1995 White Paper to be an important element in the strategy for the development of Slovenian education.

In 1991, a number of steps were taken to support the development of adult education. Special funds were provided by the Government and a special adult education unit, which later grew into a department, began work within the Ministry of Education and Sport. In the same year, the Slovenian Adult Education Centre was established. The Centre is the institution in charge of adult education nationally, and is responsible for the development, research and support functions of the system of adult education. It is also responsible for various initiatives and new approaches in both formal and informal adult education.

Legal basis of adult education

Adult education is, in the main, regulated by the Organisation and Funding of Education Act (1996) and the Adult Education Act (1996), while formal vocational education programmes are regulated by the Vocational and Technical Education Act (1996) and formal secondary general education by the Gymnasiums Act (1996). Besides general regulations, the Organisation and Funding of Education Act also sets out:

- details of education and training programmes, including programme elements, programme accreditation, the selection of providers, information etc.;
- the competence of national bodies in the field of education;
- the prerequisites for carrying out education and training;
- the representative bodies of providers; and
- the financing and regulation of education.

The Government has appointed the Council of Experts for Adult Education, which consists of experts in the field who have been proposed by the relevant chambers, trade unions, public institutions and other relevant organisations. The Council's tasks include:

- the planning of adult education policies;
- the organisation, quality and effectiveness of education programmes; and

- programme and educational development, including the accreditation of programmes, catalogues and criteria of knowledge and other technical questions which influence the delivery of adult education.

The Adult Education Act lays down conditions concerning: the persons eligible to participate in adult education programmes and certain programmes not regulated by the Vocational and Technical Education Act, the Gymnasiums Act and other acts; public services in the field of adult education; and the conditions attached to the provision of public services etc. The Act also outlines the National Programme to be drawn up by Government and submitted for approval to Parliament.

The National Programme sets out the public interest in the field of adult education. It specifies the main purposes of adult education, a list of priority areas, action to implement the National Programme and the extent of public resources required. The National Programme for the period until 2010, which is currently in the process of adoption, lays down three fundamental priorities. Under the first priority the state is obliged to:

a) enable the acquisition of both information and knowledge in order to improve the quality of life and raise the level of culture and civilisation among the population generally, by further developing informal adult education;

b) create the conditions for raising the general level of education and, thus, reduce considerably the proportion of people without any suitable qualifications by using various forms and possibilities of education and training; and

c) increase the educational level of both the employed and the unemployed.

The second priority is the vocational education of adults. The objectives, here, include:

a) increasing the level of basic knowledge and skills with the aim of reducing, eliminating and preventing the marginalisation of some social groups; and

b) raising the educational level throughout the whole sector.

The third priority concerns the development of human resources. The National Programme also stipulates that the state and the social partners are responsible for the creation and development of an environment which would enable implementation of the stated aims as well as the provision of an estimate of the material and human resources required for this purpose.

Adult education is also affected by labour market regulations. In this regard, the Labour Relations Act lays down the right of the employed to education, the Pension and Disability Insurance Act lays down the right of disabled workers to vocational rehabilitation, and the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act deals with the right of the unemployed to education and training. The role of legislation regulating individual economic activities is also significant in that it specifies the terms for performing certain activities or occupations, including the requirement for frequent additional education and training (Ivancic, 1998).

The importance of further investment in adult education is highlighted in the document, *"Strategic aims of labour market development until 2006: employment policy and programmes for its implementation"*, adopted by the Government of the in November 1999. Raising the skills level of the labour force is one of the key strategic aims. The strategic aims defined in the document, also form the basis for the "Employment Action Plan for the years 2000 and 2001" which specifies key measures to be taken to underpin the policies and reach the desired targets. On the question of how to increase employment, it expresses a preference for measures aimed at the acquisition and upgrading of key labour force skills.

Impact of vocational education reform on adult education

The education legislation passed in 1996 has brought about major changes and innovations in vocational and technical education, which also bear on adult education.

- Syllabuses have been prepared for the programmes of short-term, secondary vocational and technical education and post-secondary vocational education. They define the standard theoretical and practical knowledge and skills required for obtaining a particular vocational and technical education degree, and the title of the relevant vocational or technical profile.
- Responsibility for implementing programmes of education, training and specialisation is currently being transferred from the Ministry of Education and Sport to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. This is intended to facilitate a better link between programme supply and labour market demand. Vocational education and training for publicly recognised occupations and for specialisation programmes fall within the competence of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, which co-operates closely with the Council of Experts for Adult Education.
- In the context of the Phare Vocational Education and Training Reform programme, a system of examinations for master craftsmen, foremen and managers has been developed.

The curriculum reform carried out from 1996-1998 was expected to encourage greater participation by adults in education, through adapting programmes of formal education to their needs and abilities. Special starting points for preparing programmes of short-term and secondary vocational and technical education for adults were adopted. The starting points define the structures that were adapted to the adults' specific needs at the outset of preparing and adopting the programmes. The Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education and the Council of Experts for Adult Education confirmed the starting-points, upon the proposal of the Curriculum Committee for Adult Education and the Curriculum Committee for Vocational Education. Directives from the Ministry of Education and Sport identify curriculum adaptation which is in the process of implementation. The emphasis is on modern organisational forms and methods of work, taking account of the existing knowledge and skills of participants and including participants in all phases of programme implementation. The directives bind the training providers to adapt course programmes to the specific needs of the target groups. Educational programme preparation, regulated by the Adult Education Act (Article 7), is laid down in the Starting-points for Curriculum Reform of Adult Education, adopted by the Council of Experts for Adult Education, upon the proposal of the Curriculum Committee for Adult Education.

3.1.2 *Provision of adult education and training*

Slovenia has a relatively well-developed network of providers of and organisations for adult education and training. There are two main types of providers of adult education and training programmes: institutions which provide training as their main activity, and institutions which provide training as an additional, secondary activity (Jelenc, 1996).

The most important types of institutions providing adult education and training programmes as their main activity are the following.

- Folk high schools, also called 'Institutes for adult education', are organised at municipal level and cater for municipal or regional needs. They offer different courses and training programmes, including language courses, secretarial courses, courses for truck drivers, courses to achieve special work qualifications etc. as well as formal basic programmes, short-term programmes, secondary education programmes etc. In 1996, there were 43 folk high schools conducting programmes for 61,633 persons, a 7.6% reduction on the year before. Of these, 72.4% enrolled in different courses and seminars,15.6% less than the year before, 18.9% enrolled in programmes for acquiring formal education, 22.1% more than the year before, and 8.7% in accredited training programmes, a 23.6% increase on the previous year) (Education, Folk High Schools, Slovenia, 1995/96, Rapid Reports, July 9, No 163/1997, Statistics Office).

- Training centres within enterprises mainly provide vocational and technical training and skills upgrading for employees of companies or a group of companies under whose auspices they have been set up. In the past, training centres were common in all big enterprises, but with the reorganisation and bankruptcies of many big companies, several centres have been closed down. Qualifications obtained through in-company training are mainly of internal value, but can sometimes substitute for an employee's inadequate education. According to official statistical data, 296 enterprises in Slovenia operated training centres in 1997.
- Secondary school departments for adult education can offer adults the same programmes provided in the regular education of youth, adapting courses and examinations accordingly. Lessons usually take place in the afternoons, evenings, or during weekends. After passing examinations for each subject as well as the final examination, adults obtain a formal certificate of the particular level and type of education equivalent to a certificate in initial education. Many adults who left school before completing their initial education manage to complete it later through school programmes for adults.
- Some institutes of higher education have well-developed study centres for adults but some make no separate arrangements for them, offering studies for adults on the same basis as regular studies.
- Special Educational Centres function fully or partially as specialist education institutions for management, foreign languages, business and technological training etc.
- Private education institutions have been rapidly increasing in number. They mainly offer language courses, computer courses, accountancy courses, technical education courses etc. In 1998, there were 74 private education institutions in Slovenia (Pecar, 1998)

Institutions that are not primarily engaged in educational activity can run educational courses as an ancillary activity. These institutions cover a very diverse range of courses. There are two kinds of such institution (Jelenc, 1996, p. 387):

- regularly functioning institutions in different fields and branches, such as science, culture, finance, agriculture, defence etc.; and
- associations, societies, clubs and other non-governmental organisations, for both professional and leisure activities.

Despite the wide range of adult education institutions and programmes, some of them are only now starting to develop residential adult education centres, and information and counselling centres. Another recent development has been the emergence of institutions using non-traditional methods of adult education, i.e., distance education centres, open universities, open learning centres, multimedia centres etc. (Jelenc, 1996).

The Slovenian Adult Education Centre collects annual data on both providers and programmes of adult education and training. In the school year 1999/2000, 186 adult education organisations offered 3,283 adult education programmes. In the 1996/97 school year 46% of all adult education programmes were defined as vocational and technical education programmes and 38% of the programmes were aimed at finishing secondary school. Programme providers consisted mainly of private organisations, 40%, but also included adult education institutes, 18%, secondary school departments for adult education, 14%, higher education institutions, 9% and educational centres, 7%. The remaining 12% was shared between associations, institutes, societies and other non-governmental organisations.

Regional distribution is uneven with 38% of all programmes provided in the Ljubljana region, 13% in the Gorenjska and Maribor regions, 11% in the Celje region, and almost negligible percentages in other regions.

Among the programmes offered, 11% aimed at attaining formal education, 18% were initial and advanced training programmes for work, 63% were general informal education programmes and 8% were other programmes. Among the informal programmes 1,063 were publicly recognised. Reflecting the wide regional disparities in access to adult education and training, most of the programmes, 24%, will be carried out in the Ljubljana region, 16% in the Gorenjska and Maribor regions and 11% in the Celje region. Percentages are significantly lower elsewhere. The majority of publicly recognised programmes are in language education, 43%, and in the field of computer and information technology, 13%. (Review of Adult Education in Slovenia: Providers and Programmes in 1999/2000, Ljubljana, ACS, November 1999).

Table 3.1 Publicly recognised education and training programmes for adults in 1998 by providers

Type of programme	Institutes for adult education		Private schools		Education centres		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Formal education programmes	177	72.8	48	19.7	18	7.5	243	100.0
Training programmes	136	49.4	120	43.7	19	6.9	275	100.0
Advanced training programmes	184	71.9	51	19.9	21	8.2	256	100.0

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport, list of publicly valid education and training programmes in 1998.

The Slovenian Adult Education Centre plays an important role in the development of new learning methods for adults and innovative adult education and training institutions. The Centre initiates and monitors the implementation of a number of projects, including study circles, learning exchanges, centres for self-directed learning, centres for the accreditation of prior knowledge etc.

Since 1997, the vocational and technical education and training of adults has been co-ordinated by the Centre for Vocational Education and Training. This Centre co-ordinates the interests of social partners in this field, prepares professional bases and co-operates in the preparation of programmes. It is, also, in charge of the accreditation procedures. Its main aim is to establish a unified vocational and technical education system. From the point of view of achieving standards of knowledge, there will be no separate school systems for the education of young people and adults.

The role of the Employment Service in continuing training and retraining is also important. In the framework of employment programmes, many unemployed persons take part in different forms of education and training. Most of these programmes are performed by external organisations - schools or other organisations - contracted by the Employment Service. The Employment Service finances or co-finances the costs for unemployed persons included in the education and training programmes.

The training of disabled persons is also co-ordinated by the Employment Service. In 1998, 1,182 disabled persons participated in training programmes, 8.6 % more than in the previous year (Employment Service, 1999).

The activities of the Employment Service also indirectly stimulate the development of the provision of educational and training programmes and competition between organisations and firms providing courses and training for the unemployed. Several small private firms specialise in education and training programmes for the unemployed and for adults generally, such as courses to enhance job search skills etc. There are also numerous small private employment agencies licensed by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, usually catering for specific categories of the unemployed.

Furthermore, vocational counselling and guidance services provided by the Employment Service, originally designed to primarily serve young people at school, has in recent years been increasingly used to help unemployed and redundant workers to obtain information on and be motivated for additional training or education. Vocational guidance for adults is carried out on both an individual consultation basis and in different forms of collective guidance, including workshops and seminars to guide the assessment of occupational abilities and establish career goals etc. In 1998, a more than sixfold increase in the number of individual sessions for unemployed people and other adults was achieved: up from 2,600 sessions in 1996 to 16,170 in 1998. At the end of 1998, the Centre for Vocational Guidance and Information was established.

Inclusion of adults in the process of education

Because of the inherent inconsistency in the various survey mechanisms and also because of the incomplete data available concerning adult training, there are no reliable statistics regarding the proportion of adults involved in various kinds of initial and continuing education and training. Available data and specific surveys, such as the Labour Force Survey and the Quality of Life in Slovenia survey, suggest that it varies between 17% and 20%. As already mentioned, the share of adults involved in formal education programmes has been increasing. However, informal forms of education and training prevail.

According to statistical data, at the beginning of the 1998/99 school year, there were 11,270 persons enrolled in secondary school programmes for adults, i.e., 13.7% more than in the previous school year. There were 11,020 persons enrolled in vocational and technical education programmes, which corresponds to almost 98% of all enrolled persons. One third, 3,693 persons, were enrolled in three-year vocational education programmes and almost two-thirds, 7,327 persons, were enrolled in secondary technical and vocational-technical programmes. Only 2% of all participants enrolled in secondary general programmes in the 1998/99 school year. Forty-three per cent of all students enrolled in programmes in the field of economics, followed by the metallurgy and machine engineering programmes with 13%, health care programmes, 7%, catering and tourism, 6.6%, and electrical engineering and computer science, 6%. Other programmes account for less than a quarter of those enrolled. Half of all enrolments were women. Women predominate in health care programmes, 85%, economics, 65%, and represent almost two thirds of those enrolled in general education programmes.

In general, adult education and training programmes offered by secondary school departments for adult education offer drop-outs from regular education programmes the opportunity of completing their education, sometimes even immediately after they have dropped out from initial education. This also explains why the age structure of persons enrolled in adult education is low: around 80% are aged from 15 to 29 years.

Table 3.2 Enrolment of adults in secondary education programmes at the beginning of the 1998/99 school year by fields of study and gender

Field of study	School year 1998/99			
	No. of enrolled persons	No. of women	% of enrolled persons	% of women
Economics	4,879	3,184	43.3	65.3
Metallurgy and mechanical engineering	1,470	27	13.1	1.8
Health care	774	660	6.9	85.3
Catering and tourism	737	371	6.6	50.3
Electrical engineering and computer science	688	6	6.1	0.9
Other	2,577	1,314	22.9	51.0
TOTAL	11,270	5,673	100.0	50.3

Source: Statistics Office, 1999.

Table 3.3 Enrolment of adults in secondary education programmes at the beginning of the 1998/99 school year by type of programme and gender

Type of programme	School year 1998/99			
	No. of enrolled persons	No. of women	% of enrolled persons	% of women
Secondary vocational programmes	3,693	2,000	32.8	54.2
Secondary technical and vocational-technical programmes	7,327	3,509	65.0	47.9
Total: all vocational and technical programmes	11,020	5,509	97.8	50.0
Gymnasium – general education	250	164	2.2	65.6
TOTAL	11,270	5,673	100.0	50.3

Source: Statistics Office, 1999.

Table 3.4 Fields of study in secondary vocational and technical education in which adults enrol most frequently at the beginning of the 1998/99 school year

Secondary vocational programmes (3 years)	% of all enrolled
Economics	47.3
Catering and tourism	10.6
Metallurgy and mechanical engineering	10.1
Agriculture and food-processing	8.9
Secondary technical and vocational-technical programmes	**% of all enrolled**
Economics	42.7
Metallurgy and mechanical engineering	15.0
Health care	7.2

Source: Statistics Office, 1999.

Education and training of employed persons

According to statistics on this area, 11,861 employed persons participated in programmes for obtaining formal education in 1996 and this decreased in 1997 by almost 16% to 9,993 persons. Of this number, 70% were included in tertiary education, 23% in post-secondary vocational education, 28.6% in higher education, 18.7% in post-graduate programmes and 18% in secondary technical and general education. On the one hand, these data are encouraging, since they show a tendency among the unemployed to improve their formal education. On the other hand, however, they show that people without a compulsory educational qualification represent a minority of those enrolled.

Table 3.5 illustrates that, besides the shorter programmes of technical education, training and advanced training, another important way of improving the qualification of the employed is training for work, since more than a quarter of all employed were enrolled in these programmes. In 1997, the 81,966 participants in these programmes represented a decrease of 1% compared to 1994, and almost 6% compared to 1996. The training programmes include programmes that aim for vocational qualifications at a lower level as well as training on legal regulations, probation and introduction to work. The programme for training on legal regulations was reported to have attracted the biggest share of participants. In 1997, 65,501 persons or almost 80% of all participants were involved in this programme, 76% of whom were trained for health and safety at work. There were 8,382 persons, 10%, participating in informal retraining programmes, 11,243, 13.7%, in internship and introduction to work programmes and 4,188, 5%, in the USO programmes from level I to level IV.

Short-term education, training and advanced training are the most popular programmes. In the past, the number of participants in these programmes was on the increase but in 1997 the numbers dropped to 214,981 participants, 24% less than in 1996 and almost 7% less than in 1994. The most popular programmes are language training, computer science programmes and management and administration programmes.

Investment in training by companies

At present, no institution collects data on how adult education and training costs are shared between employers and the employed. Collective agreements provide for the reimbursement of direct material costs and paid leave from work where the employer sends an employee to attend a training course or where the training is in the employer's interest. In the absence of collective agreements, a bilateral agreement is made between employee and employer. In 1997 a survey was carried out among managers from 30 companies, 50% of which were large, 30% medium-sized and 20% small. According to this survey, 6% invested 1-1.5% of their total revenue in training, 88% invested 0.1-1%, while 6% were unable to estimate their investment. (see Ivancic et al., 1999, p. 8)

According to 1997 data (Statistics Office, AOP extract from survey SOL-ZAP for 1997, Table 2.8) 2,327 companies employing 335,318 persons spent altogether SIT 8.3 billion on training. Funds allocated for investment in training in 1998 amounted to approximately SIT 7.5, which means even less financial investment by companies in training. There is no fund, at present, to support the financing of training of employed persons.

Table 3.5 Number of employees, participating in various education and training programmes in the period 1994-1997

Education and training programmes	1994	1995	1996	1997
Formal technical education	10,645	11,722	11,861	9,933
Specialisations	737	734	801	692
Re-qualifications	1,765	1,565	2,629	1,096
Training	83,012	86,902	86,997	81,966
Advanced training	230,220	262,785	282,349	214,981
TOTAL	326,379	363,708	384,637	308,635

Sources: Education: Rapid reports No 129, 1998, Statistics Office. Rapid reports No 279, 1996, Statistics Office. Statistics Yearbook 1996, Statistics Office.

Table 3.6 Proportions of the unemployed, taking part in education and training by type of programme, 1994-1997

Education and training programmes	1994	1995	1996	1997
Formal technical education	3.26	3.22	3.08	3.22
Specialisations	0.23	0.20	0.21	0.22
Re-qualifications	0.54	0.43	0.68	0.36
Training	25.43	23.89	22.62	26.56
Advanced training	70.54	72.25	73.41	69.66
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Sources: Education: Rapid reports No 129, 1998, Statistics Office. Rapid reports No 279, 1996, Statistics Office. Statistics Yearbook 1996, Statistics Office.

Table 3.7 Index of growth – participation of employees in education and training by type of programme, 1994-1997 (1994=100)

Education and training programmes	1995	1996	1997
Formal technical education	110.12	111.42	93.31
Specialisations	99.59	108.68	93.89
Re-qualifications	88.67	148.95	62.10
Training	104.69	104.80	98.74
Advanced training	114.15	122.64	93.38
TOTAL	111.44	117.85	94.56

Sources: Education: Rapid reports No 129, 1998, Statistics Office. Rapid reports No 279, 1996, Statistics Office. Statistics Yearbook 1996, Statistics Office.

Participation of unemployed persons in education and training programmes

It is difficult to estimate the proportion of unemployed people participating in education and training programmes financed by the Employment Service. Most programmes are short-term, so the unemployed can enrol in more than one programme per year. Assuming that each participant enrolled in only one programme, 12% of all unemployed would have participated in 1997 and 23% in 1998, which could be considered satisfactory.

The tables below show changes in the number and proportions of unemployed persons participating in education and training programmes. As can be seen, the number enrolled in functional training, formal education and on-the-job training programmes increased significantly in 1998. This is due to shifts in the Government's employment policy in favour of improving the quality of the labour force through the acquisition of widely transferable qualifications. These lead to greater employability and facilitate continuous skills upgrading. In 1998 the Government adopted a special training programme for the unemployed. This programme was launched during the school year 1998/99 and aimed at the inclusion of 5,000 unemployed persons in formal education programmes at upper secondary level or lower level. The Government allocated 33.5% more resources to education and training than in 1997, bringing the total amount to SIT 2.2 million (Employment Service, 1999). The smaller number of participants in the USO programmes is due to the expiry of their eligibility in 1998.

The measures are primarily targeted at young people, as is clearly illustrated by the data on participants in "Programme 5000", which shows that 75% of all participants were under 26 years of age.

Table 3.8 Unemployed persons participating in education and training by type of programme, 1994-1998

Group of programmes	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Functional training	5,550	10,290	11,559	8,442*	14,433*
Formal education	1,312	2,224	2,235	1,955	7,736
On-the-job training	2,555	2,753	3,491	4,057	6,350
Training without employment	315	283	92	119	350
USO programmes	1,036	906	790	444	358
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	10,768	16,456	18,167	15,017	29,227

* *Participating in programmes of assistance in planning a professional career and seeking employment, and in psycho-social rehabilitation programmes.*

Source: Employment Service – Annual Report 1998.

Table 3.9 Proportion of the unemployed taking part in education and training by type of programme, 1994-1998

Group of programmes	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Functional training	51.54	62.53	63.63	56.22	49.38
Formal education	12.18	13.51	12.30	13.02	26.47
On-the-job training	23.73	16.73	19.22	27.02	21.73
Training without employment	2.93	1.72	0.51	0.79	1.20
USO programmes	9.62	5.51	4.35	2.96	1.22
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Employment Service – Annual Report 1998 (own calculations).

Table 3.10 Index of growth – participation of the unemployed in education and training by type of programme, 1994 -1998 (1994 =100)

Group of programmes	1995	1996	1997	1998
Functional training	185.41	208.27	152.11	260.05
Formal education	169.51	170.35	149.01	589.63
On-the-job training	107.75	136.63	158.79	248.53
Training without employment	89.84	29.21	37.78	111.11
USO programmes	87.45	76.25	42.86	34.56
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	152.82	168.71	139.46	271.42

Source: Employment Service – Annual Report 1998 (own calculations).

It is clear that trends of adult participation in education and training are directly linked to the extent of financial resources earmarked by the state for this purpose. Since there are no stable budgetary resources provided, changes in participation rates are likely to occur from year to year. Neither employers nor individuals have adequate means or incentives to invest in training. With the exception of education and training for the unemployed, the system of financing does not take into account the actual demand. A better balance between supply and demand needs to be encouraged.

3.2 Management and administrators' training

Management and administrators' training is quite extensive and diverse in Slovenia. While there is no unified system, these areas are nevertheless adequately covered by public and private institutions. However, data on private institutions providing various kinds of education and training are not collected at one single location. They mostly respond to direct demands for training. Some companies submit tenders that are usually invited by public institutions once a year and designed to meet their specific training needs.

It is virtually impossible to analyse all the kinds of training provided for managers and administrators in Slovenia. There are no data available on the types of training, the characteristics and numbers of participants or the success rate of training. There is no systematic approach to or review of the training of managers and administrators, except for the training provided for state administration and public schools. The state, through its para-state institutions, has the role of both an organiser, co-ordinator and funder of such training.

All other sectors follow the principle of market demand and supply. Sometimes, however, sectoral ministries co-finance or contribute in some other way to the acquisition of knowledge and skills by business managers. For example, the national and regional employment services encourage self-employment either through specific training or arranging for the training of new or would-be entrepreneurs.

Training of public officials

In general, supply in this field is quite mixed. The number of new training and service providers grows every year, which increases competition and may improve the quality of provision. Anyone wishing to undergo a particular management training course can normally be catered for.

Training is relatively easily accessible to the interested public through the system of state institutions. While registration numbers are quite low, actual participation is even lower. This may be because employees who register for a course later cancel it because of a lack of time due to various other obligations.

Training for state administration is, for the most part, organised and provided by the Academy of Administration which is under the control of the Ministry of the Interior. It covers a wide range of training for persons employed in state and local administrations, public institutions etc. Every six months the Academy issues a catalogue of training that comprises several training cycles and every year new training programmes are offered. Training is provided on a non-profit basis.

The four main training programmes offered by the Academy of Administration include:

- initial preparatory courses for state proficiency examinations for civil servants;
- public administration working skills and managing legislative changes;
- management and personal development skills; and
- foreign languages training.

The second and third types of programme attracted 2,586 participants in the period from September 1997 to December 1998. Interest has been steadily growing especially among officials concerned with administrative tasks and the majority of participants had undergone higher education. The majority came from administrative units, followed by ministries, governmental offices and municipalities. There were 1,951 participants in the first type of programme, the majority from ministries. The fourth type of programme, foreign languages, attracted 985 participants but the number has been declining. This may be due to a limited state budget as well as the fact that the majority of the employed have attained higher professional or university education and, thus, already possess some language skills.

Teacher training

Training for teachers and school managers is widely available. The National Education Institute issues annual catalogues which list a wide selection of providers, ranging from public schools to private institutions. The programmes offered range from strictly school-related ones to those on new methods and managerial skills, such as communications, strategic planning, project management etc.

The catalogue also lists obligatory training courses, including:

- additional training in the field of information and computer science; and
- training of teacher-trainers, and training for craftsmen, foremen and managers to obtain pedagogical skills etc.

Some fields have a higher priority than others. The high priority areas include:

- programmes for interns and their mentors;
- advanced training for work with persons with special needs;
- advanced training for managerial workers;
- computer and information technology; and
- advanced training for teachers involved in the preparation of final exams.

In the school year 1997/98, 1,208 different programmes were included in the Catalogue for In-Service Training of Teachers and Trainers. There were 135 providers mainly based in Ljubljana and Maribor. These included university faculties, public institutions, adult training institutes and private organisations. Vocational and technical education accounts for 23% of all providers.

Table 3.11 Training programmes covered by the Catalogue for In-Service Training of Teachers and Trainers, 1997/98 school year

Type of programme	Number of programmes on offer	Number of programmes implemented	Offer/ implementation ratio
Ordered programmes	136	71	52.21
Priority programmes	354	212	59.89
Other programmes	718	381	53.06
TOTAL	1,208	664	54.97

Source: National Education Institute.

This table shows that only half the programmes on offer are actually implemented. However, the implementation of additional programmes is even higher, over 75%, which illustrates the greater demand for certain programmes. Three-day programmes are the most widely sought.

Participants evaluate all programmes. The average grade of all programmes was 5.28 from a 6.00 maximum. The programmes for managers were given the lowest grading, 4.18.

In total, there were 35,474 participants, 63.7% of the number provided for, in all forms of training. The highest preference was for seminars under expert supervision while interdisciplinary programmes were the least popular. Among the particular programmes, interest was highest in computer skills, which attracted 5,314 participants.

Having successfully completed a programme, participants are awarded a certificate, which can enhance their promotion prospects. However, this was obviously not the only reason for participating, since only 21,712 participants, 61.2%, claimed a certificate.

All the above mentioned programmes are financed by the state. The state contributes 50% of the costs for around a quarter of the programmes. It finances another quarter entirely and an additional 40% almost entirely.

Forty-five vocational and technical education programmes were registered with the Centre for Vocational Education and Training and 18 programmes were registered within the Slovenian Adult Education Centre, including a number of programmes related to managerial and administrative activities.

Slovenian Education Days

Every year, a 4-5 day educational event called "Slovenian Education Days" is held in Ljubljana, where presentations relating to topics intended for managerial and administrative workers in education and public services are made. Exhibitors include various schools, public institutions in the field of developing training and education, the two Slovenian universities, other state institutions as well as private institutions. In 1999, this event covered 155 themes, of which information technology, international activities, forms and methods of work in the field of training and schools' partnerships were the topics that aroused most interest. A specific day was dedicated to ways and means of assessing quality in education.

Once each year the Ministry of Education and Sport organises a conference for all school and kindergarten principals, to discuss current issues. Twice a year the Ministry organises training sessions in order to inform and train schools managers and administrative staff at regional level. In addition, training is also provided for counsellors working in schools. Both the Centre for Vocational Education and Training and the National Education Institute provide information on curriculum and other innovations.

School managers' training

Special attention is given to the training of school managers in the management training system. The Government has established a 'School for Principals' which provides training for school principals, aspiring schools principals and other managerial staff in the field of education and training. It is a public institution, partially financed from the state budget and its programmes are included in the Catalogue of Permanent Professional Training Programmes for Teachers and Trainers which is aimed at all school principals and all aspiring school principals. The School also organises 'refresher' courses.

The School's programme includes a series of modules: pedagogic management, teaching methods and the introduction of innovations, organisation and management theory, planning and decision making, conflict solving, monitoring of lessons and structuring meetings, organisational climate and culture, motivation, planning, career development and legislation.

In order to become a school principal, a candidate must obtain a special headmaster's licence. This applies to principals of all schools, from pre-school institutions to post-secondary vocational colleges. Currently, all principals are obliged to obtain the licence no later than two years after they have been appointed. By the year 2000, all principals will be obliged to have it and, thereafter, a headmaster's licence will be a necessary condition for contesting elections to be the principal of any school.

All other programmes delivered by the School for Principals are optional. They are considered part of in-service training and professional and personal development. Besides the programmes for school principals, the School organises training for teaching staff, covering various topics such as communication, personal and career development, stress control etc.

The School for Principals also organises various short expert educational meetings for managerial and administrative staff in the field of education, such as expert meetings of principals' assistants, and workshops on communication, the introduction of change etc. In 1999 the following topics predominated: teaching methods and methods of work in the classroom; career planning; creativity; school quality; European education standards; school atmosphere; marketing relations in the field of education; work in the school environment; work planning; and staff restructuring.

Training for managers and teachers of adult training programmes

The Slovenian Adult Education Centre arranges for advanced training programmes for school managers and teachers involved in the training and retraining of unemployed adults as well as for counsellors. Programmes include the skills needed for delivering the annual training programme for the unemployed and ensuring that the unemployed reach their educational and career goals.

The Slovenian Adult Education Centre organises various other forms of advanced training for management and work in the field of adult education. Training and advanced training of teachers and other experts dealing with adult education is regularly organised in order to stimulate innovations in educational work. There are also 'basic' courses on adult education intended for experts teaching adults or organising education for adults. They include development of new module-based training programmes, evaluation of courses completed, and improvement of the existing educational content.

There are also regular programmes of advanced training aimed at the implementation of projects already designed, thereby introducing research findings into educational practice. These programmes also cover the training of organisations and individuals to further the development of projects developed within the Slovenian Adult Education Centre. In 1999, 12 such educational programmes were carried out, involving 480 hours of educational work and 254 participants.

In 1999, 13 programmes, involving 526 hours and 228 participants, were carried out in the field of training and advanced training for acquiring international certificates and programmes designed for individuals who wished to train their co-workers for adult education work. In addition, 15 expert and information meetings were held, with the participation of 300 experts in the field of adult education. Participants came from various adult education institutions or had already participated in advanced training provided by external experts from the Slovenian Adult Education Centre. The full range of activities is described in a catalogue published annually.

Training of mentors and craftsmen, foremen and managers

Training of mentors and craftsmen, foremen and managers, i.e., persons responsible for further training in their companies, is mainly organised through the Chamber of Crafts and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. They organise training themselves, using their own services. Sometimes, providers may also be schools but in most cases they are private organisations or companies. Recently, responsibility for this kind of training has been, in some cases, assigned to post-secondary vocational colleges, e.g., the Post-secondary Vocational College for Catering and Tourism in Bled carries out training of students' mentors and newly employed persons in the field of catering and tourism. Both Chambers have recently co-founded various educational institutions that train employed persons according to their own requirements or requirements determined by the Chambers.

Besides these institutions, there are also some other non-profit organisations operating in this field. For example, the Centre for Technological Training has developed a wide range of training and advisory services for management and administrative personnel in the economic field as well as for the target group connected to vocational and technical education. In 1998, 5,095 persons participated in 309 seminars or workshops. The emphasis is put on practical knowledge and experience, supplemented by expert literature. Almost half of their activities are carried out on the basis of prior training needs analyses and in co-operation with future participants or the companies employing these participants. The main areas of activity are: management and quality evaluation, including quality control, standards, methods and techniques; and human resource management and expert work, including human resource development, human resource operation, training of trainers, pedagogical training of instructors and mentors etc.

There are also some postgraduate studies in the field of management training. The Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana offers a postgraduate course on the management of non-profit organisations, including advanced sociology, quality control, communications, law, human resource management, creativity, strategic planning, economy, information technology, state administration etc. The Faculty of Organisational Sciences at the University of Maribor offers postgraduate courses to enhance theoretical knowledge in the field of human resource development in education, management of quality, information systems etc.

In summary, the standard of training in the fields of quality control, curriculum development, teaching methods and evaluation is good and that there is easy and equal access to training. However, there is almost no advanced training offered in the area of knowledge standards, assessment and certification. There are enough high-quality institutions in Slovenia dealing with development and counselling in the field of education and training. These are provided, in particular, by Faculties of Education in both Ljubljana and Maribor, the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, among others and by public institutions, including the National Education Institute, the Centre for Vocational Education, the Slovenian Adult Education Centre, the School for Principals etc. These institutions are also training providers.

4. Research on the labour market and vocational education and training

With the reform of the education system in 1996, the division between vocational and general education was reintroduced. During the career-oriented education period, a uniform education system offering qualifications for employment and academic education was in operation and there was no dividing line between research in vocational and other kinds of education. A distinction did exist between secondary and tertiary education and between education for young people and adults and there was a similar division with regard to research projects on education of national importance. In the course of the last five years, however, research interests in the field of vocational education and training have become more clearly defined.

Pedagogical, sociological and legal aspects of education are the most frequently researched aspects, whereas there is almost no research carried out on the economic aspects of education. However, these aspects have become more popular in recent years, due to the widely discussed division of responsibilities for vocational education and training between the state and the economic actors. In this context, the most frequently researched areas are: systems of financing education with the emphasis on the need for new financial instruments; and how to ensure access to education for all social groups.

Taking into account the division between fundamental, applied and developmental research, it could be said that there is little interest in basic research in the field of vocational education and training. During the 1990s, developmental research projects have been the most numerous. Basic research is viewed, mainly, as something to be carried out at the national level, while interest is much greater in research projects that lead to practical results in the short term. The actual extent of developmental research is unclear, since it is financed from diverse sources and carried out by various institutions and individuals. Consequently, there is no systematic gathering of information in one place.

According to analysis of recent research topics, most interest was devoted to comparative analysis of vocational education and training systems, including the regulatory regime, the system itself, management and financing issues, infrastructure and programmes. There is a growing interest in questions regarding new approaches to curriculum development, new teaching methods and technologies, innovations in the field of assessing and certifying knowledge, quality standards, training and qualifications of teaching staff etc. There is also a growing interest the relationship between vocational education and training and the labour market. Applied research has been the most extensive and issues being researched depend largely on the interest of the institution funding the project.

In the education area, most interest is devoted to the analysis of programmes and their practical implementation with a view to achieving specific learning goals. Research into the labour market, focuses on assessing the impact of training and retraining measures on employability and on reducing unemployment. Research on specific issues is funded by ministries, local communities, political parties, associations of employers, companies and institutions. Associations of employers are mainly interested in issues referring to the dual system of vocational education and training as well as the organisation of training for employed persons. So far, the trade unions have not shown any interest in vocational education and training research.

Prior to the transition period, research activity was decentralised to self-management communities at State, regional and local levels. Since 1991, it has been determined at national level and is regulated by the Act on Research Activity (Official Gazette, No 8-355/91), which sets out the objectives of national research activity and regulates state activities in the field of research. By law, public research activity is carried out by public research institutions, the Slovenian Academy of Art and Science, faculties, professional colleges and art academies and those higher education institutions that fulfil the conditions for carrying out research activity. These institutions are authorised to carry out research projects in the framework of the National Research Programme.

Research activity can also be carried out by other institutions registered at the Ministry of Science and Technology. Research projects funded from sources other than those specified in the Act on Research Activity can be carried out by any public or private body. They must have a track record of research activities and must prove, by the quality of their research proposals and their financial and staff resources, that they are qualified to carry out a specific research activity. Higher education institutions are, by definition, included in the range of research providers, in the field of vocational education and training. They may be funded from state funds or from other, often international, sources.

The Centre for Vocational Education and Training, which is the main national developmental institution in the field of vocational education and training, is not registered as a research institute. However, the Centre often commissions research projects from external research institutions. In addition, there are some research activities within the Centre itself, such as work on developing a methodology for evaluating vocational education and training programmes and several evaluation studies as well as within the National Vocational Education and Training Observatory, which is located in the Centre.

In recent years, the following reports and studies were produced or co-ordinated by the National Vocational Education and Training Observatory.

- Trbanc, M., (ed.) (1997), Report on the Vocational Education and Training System, National Observatory Country Report, Slovenia, Ljubljana 1997.
- Polak. M., Trbanc, M., (1997), The Report on Tertiary Professional/Vocational Education in Slovenia, National Vocational Education and Training Observatory, Ljubljana.
- Vocational Education and Training and Labour Market Key Indicators Report for Slovenia for years 1996, 1997, 1998.
- Stanojevič, M., Šlander, V., Trbanc, M. (1998), The Role of Social Partners in the Development of Training in Slovenia, National Vocational Education and Training Observatory, Ljubljana 1998.
- Ivančič, A. (1998): Recognition of Regulated Professions and Professional Activities in Slovenia Covered by Directive 92/51 EEC, National Vocational Education and Training Observatory, Ljubljana.
-Verša, D. (et al) (1998), Vocational Education and Training in the Context of Regional Development in Slovenia, National Employment Office, National Vocational Education and Training Observatory, Ljubljana.
- Ivančič, A., Mirčeva, J., Barbo Škerbinc, M.(1998): Continuing Vocational Training in Slovenia, National Vocational Education and Training Observatory, Ljubljana.

- Debeljak, M. (1998): Teacher/Trainer Training in Vocational Education and Training, National Vocational Education and Training Observatory, Ljubljana.
- Geržina, S., Polak, M. (1999), Report on Developments in Vocational Education and Training in Slovenia, 1998, National Vocational Education and Training Observatory, Ljubljana, January 1999.
- Sever, B., (1999), Review of Sources and Systems of Information on Vocational Qualifications in Slovenia, National Vocational Education and Training Observatory, Centre for Vocational Education and Training, Ljubljana.
- Ivančič, A., Muršak, J., Trbanc, M., Geržina, S. (1999), Vocational Education and Training Research in Slovenia, National Vocational Education and Training Observatory, Ljubljana, September 1999.

There are, also, opportunities to promote research and innovation in the field of vocational education and training within the Leonardo da Vinci programme, such as research into occupational skills and the promotion of employment; the contribution of vocational education and training to innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises; and the contribution of vocational education and training to regional development, social dialogue etc. Given that Slovenia has only recently become a full member of the programme, no analyses or projects have been carried out so far which were led by Slovenian promoters. There are plans, however, to actively involve Slovenian researchers in the Leonardo da Vinci Programme II (2000 - 2006).

In summary, the establishment of the Centre for Vocational Education and Training as a national development institution in the field has resulted in a growing awareness of the importance of vocational education and training in the economic and social development of the country. The Centre for Vocational Education and Training has a co-ordinating function in all important elements of the national vocational education and training strategy, including: decision making and planning; curricula; teacher training; equipment; and vocational standards development.

In the general education area, various research activities are carried out by the National Education Institute. The situation in the field of adult education is somewhat different. Within the Slovenian Adult Education Centre, which is the central developmental institution for adult education, there is a designated research group responsible for research activities. This group carries out research projects in the field of continuing vocational education as part of the National Research Programme as well as other research projects funded from various sources. In addition, the Pedagogical Institute at the University of Ljubljana carries out a considerable number of research projects that are of national interest in the field of education.

The involvement of university faculties in vocational education and training research is closely linked to the interests of their researchers. Research activities at universities such as the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana were among the most influential in the lead up to the introduction of the new vocational education and training system. Researchers at both independent and university research institutes, e.g., the Institute of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Social Sciences, also carry out research projects dealing with the relationship between vocational education and training and the labour market.

Although researchers in academic institutions are, usually, more involved in research projects of national interest, they also participate in developmental and advisory projects at the behest of companies, including the development and implementation of activities in the field of human resources development, training organisation, career planning etc.

During the transition, the extent of research commissioned by companies has decreased due to financial difficulties, company restructuring etc. although, co-operation has been strengthened in the field of human resources development and in training activities. In this context, undergraduate and post-graduate training courses for employed persons are carried out in the form of short-term seminars, and BA and MA degree courses (Ivančič, A., Muršak, J., Trbanc, M., Geržina, S., 1999).

Research on education and training by the faculties and institutes of the University of Ljubljana is mostly general in nature and concentrates on comparing the Slovenian education system to the education systems of other countries. The research is focused, usually, on the pedagogical process, didactic approaches and methods, and on the acquisition and evaluation of knowledge. The Institute of Pedagogy carries out research into the acquisition of knowledge in primary and secondary schools, different evaluation methods, knowledge standards at different schools and the situation of talented children. They also evaluate primary and secondary school programmes and carry out staff development analyses.

The Faculty of Arts, Department of Pedagogy carries out comparative studies of secondary education in some European countries and on the development and reform of the systems of vocational education, including teaching methodologies etc.

The Faculty of Education of the University of Ljubljana and the Faculty of Pedagogy of the University of Maribor also carry out some research on education and training. The Institute for Economic Research in Ljubljana researches the field of welfare economics and human resources, within which considerable attention is given to the economics of education and training. The Faculty of Social Sciences of the Institute of Social Sciences undertakes research into higher education and labour market developments, in particular, unemployment, the changing positions of certain groups on the labour market and trends in employment and unemployment as well as into issues relating to quality of life, occupations and occupational standards etc. Within the Faculty, the Youth Studies department of the Centre of Social Psychology carries out various youth studies, including into life styles, opinions and expectations of young people and how these relate to education and employment prospects.

Two international developmental research projects emphasising the link between vocational education and training, the labour market and the economy are also pertinent here. Both are carried out under the auspices of the Centre for Organisational and Human Resource Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The Integration of Work and Learning project, involving Slovenia and Hungary, is a three-year project that started in April 1998. Specific objectives of the project include:

- to support and supplement innovative vocational education and training actions in the field of integration of work and learning;
- to improve the conditions for further integration of work and learning for both individuals and training and work organisations; and
- to establish co-operation and an exchange of experience between the organisations most advanced in the implementation of integration of work and learning in the countries concerned.

The Scenarios and Strategies for Vocational Education and Training in Europe project involves six European Union Member States and five Central and East European countries and is sponsored by the Centre for the Development of Vocational Training and the European Training Foundation. It aims at describing scenarios and strategies that can serve as a tool to improve the understanding of vocational education and training systems in various contexts and that can serve as a sound basis for advice to decision-makers at national and European levels.

The Centre for Organisational and Human Resource Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences also supports the Phare 1997 Modernisation of Curricula, Certification and Assessment programme by providing background studies on several topics, among which the most important are the study on developing the certification system for adult education and an analysis of issues and measures in connection with the problem of school drop-outs in Slovenia. The Centre will also participate in the evaluation of forms of vocational education and training newly developed under the Phare 1994 Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme in Slovenia.

Some labour market research is carried out by the Institute for Macroeconomic Research and Development, in particular, by the Department for Social Development which also undertakes developmental analysis and labour force forecasting. The Employment Service, also, carries out some research and evaluation activities, and prepares statistics and analyses in the areas of employment, unemployment, unemployment insurance and scholarships. Occasionally, small-scale research is undertaken on certain groups of unemployed at higher risk or on specific issues, e.g., handicapped unemployed, long-term unemployed, unemployed with no vocational qualifications, unemployed over 40, labour market demand etc. Assessments of the impact and efficiency of active employment policy programmes and measures are also carried out. At regional level, the Human Resources Development Fund in Maribor carries out various studies into training needs arising from labour market requirements.

5. Responsible bodies

The Ministry of Education and Sport has overall responsibility for the entire school system from pre-school education, which was the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs until 1993, to higher education. It is responsible for both initial and adult education, although some responsibility for adult education is shared with the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. The Ministry of Education and Sport is, therefore, the main policy-making body with budgetary responsibility and control. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education and Sport are responsible for the state budget and expenditure in the field of education. The Ministry of Internal Affairs funds the education and training of the police and the training and higher professional education of clerical staff.

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs is responsible for preparing the methodology of occupational standards, on the basis of which the skills required for performing occupations are determined and, consequently, the vocational and technical education and training programmes are prepared. The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has significant responsibilities for vocational education and training, for co-ordination between the social partners and for professional development. This Ministry is also responsible for the overall development and implementation of the certificate system in the area of adult education.

5.1 Central level

5.1.1 Governmental, public and social partner bodies

The Ministry of Education and Sport sets out the national policy on education and sport. Its primary responsibilities relate to the structuring and funding of the system, the management of publicly run institutions, inspection procedures and financial aid. It prepares legislation in the fields of education and sport and is, also, responsible for implementing legislation and associated administrative decisions concerning the following:

- pre-school, basic, secondary general, vocational and technical education, post-secondary vocational education and higher education;
- the education of children with special needs;
- music education;
- adult education;
- the education of Slovenian minorities in Austria, Italy and Hungary;
- supplementary courses on the Slovenian language and culture for Slovenians abroad;
- in-service education and training of teachers;
- the national promotion of physical education and recreational sports; and
- dormitory accommodation for residential secondary school students and university halls of residence.

The Ministry of Education and Sport is headed by the Minister. Five State Secretaries are responsible for pre-school and basic education, secondary education, higher education, investment in school and sport, respectively. The State Secretary for secondary education is responsible for both general education and vocational and technical education. The Ministry of Education and Sport consists of the following departments: the Department of Pre-school Education, the Department of Basic Education, the Department of Secondary Education, the Department of Higher Education, the Department of Adult Education, and the Department of Sports. Within the Ministry of Education and Sport there are offices for the following:

- financial planning;
- international co-operation and education abroad;
- capital investment and school equipment;
- information and documentation systems in education; and
- staff development.

Three bodies function within the Ministry of Education and Sport. These are the Education Development Unit, the National Inspectorate for Education and Sport and the Youth Office.

The Education Development Unit is the most important professional body of the Ministry of Education and Sport. Its main tasks are:

- monitoring the preparation of programmes;
- proposing programmes for approval by the Minister for Education;
- analysing trends in the field of education;
- preparing current educational policy guidelines, analysing current and long-term needs and evaluating proposals for development measures and institutional change;
- drafting strategic proposals for Government;
- developing methodologies;
- co-ordinating the work of the National Curriculum Council; and
- co-ordinating the allocation of Ministry funds for educational research.

The National Inspectorate for Education and Sport oversees the implementation of legislation and other regulations and administrative acts setting out the organisation, financing and provision of services by kindergartens, schools and other educational institutions.

The Youth Office oversees the following:

- the monitoring of the situation of the young people in society;
- improvements in the organisation and activities of young people and their associations;
- the promotion of social mobility among young people;
- the promotion of information and counselling services for young people;
- the promotion of international youth exchanges;
- travel subsidies for children and young people;
- development of extramural activities for young people; and
- creation of conditions for the integration of young people into society.

The following public institutions were set up by the Government to carry out the developmental and counselling tasks in different fields of education.

The National Education Institute provides expertise and counselling in the field of pre-school education, basic education, gymnasium, musical education, education offered by dormitories for secondary school students, education of children with special needs, and for general education subjects in vocational and technical education. The National Education Institute plays a major role in organising in-service teacher training and prepares professional background documents for the decisions of the Professional Council for General Education. It oversees pilot projects in all the fields mentioned above and has special responsibility for the preparation and verification of textbooks, teaching materials and teaching aids as well as for co-ordinating international professional co-operation.

The Centre for Vocational Education and Training was established in 1995 by the social partners – the Ministries of Education and Sport and of Labour, Family and Social Affairs as well as the Chambers of Crafts and of Commerce and Industry. It is financed by the founding parties, with by far the largest share coming from the Ministry of Education and Sport. The Centre is becoming a key development and counselling institution in the field of vocational and technical education and training. It is heavily involved in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of all new forms of vocational and technical programmes and was a major subcontractor for the implementation of the Phare Vocational Education and Training Reform programme. It assists vocational and technical schools, mediates between them and employers and supports and facilitates the involvement of the social partners. The Centre's main activity is the development and modernisation of vocational education and training curricula and all related activities, including:

- in-service training for teachers and trainers in vocational education and training;
- school equipment; and
- development of learning and training materials and standards.

As part of curriculum development and modernisation, the Centre:

- oversees curriculum working groups for technical subjects;
- proposes curricula for vocational and technical programmes, catalogues of knowledge and catalogues of examinations;
- ensures co-operation with foreign experts; and
- takes part in preparing the programmes for master craftsmen and foremen examinations etc.

It is also in charge of vocational and technical standardisation procedures, it carries out various activities in the field of occupational standards and is involved in the design and implementation of the certification system for adult education. The European Union Programmes Agency and the National Vocational Education and Training Observatory are based in the Centre.

The organisation and work programme of the European Union Programmes Agency is agreed between the European Commission and the Ministry of Education and Sport for the Socrates programme and between the Centre for Vocational Education and Training and the European Commission for the Leonardo da Vinci programme. The Agency's tasks in respect of the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes relate, mostly, to the human resources and social activities elements of the structural funds.

The National Vocational Education and Training Observatory was established at the end of 1996 on the initiative and with a support of the European Training Foundation. Its main functions are to provide precise and up-to-date information and analyses of vocational education and training and the labour market and to ensure an ongoing, systematic information flow on the national and international levels.

In 1991, the Slovenian Adult Education Centre was founded to promote the development of adult education. It is the main, non-governmental and non-profit institution for research, development and counselling in adult education in Slovenia. It aims to develops adult education in accordance with the strategy and principles of lifelong learning as a relatively distinct field within the overall system of education.

The National Education Institute, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training and the Slovenian Adult Education Centre each carry out the following tasks in their respective areas:

- preparing expert guidance for decision-making on matters within the competence of the Councils of Experts;
- monitoring the implementation of pilot reform measures;
- providing consultant services to schools and institutions carrying out state-approved programmes, and to employers taking part in vocational education and training (pre-school institutions and general education schools in the case of the National Education Institute, vocational and technical schools in the case of the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, and adult education institutions in the case of the Slovenian Adult Education Centre);
- organising ongoing in-service training of teachers, educators and principals; and
- designing a methodology for producing textbooks and other educational material.

The School for Principals was established for pre- and in-service training of school principals.

The Government also established the National Examination Centre, which has responsibility for external assessment of pupils, secondary-school students and adult learners. The National Examination Centre is responsible for the Matura examinations.

The Statistics Office is the main institution collecting, storing and publishing data, on education, employment and unemployment, in regular statistical publications. The Office is also responsible for all officially used classifications in Slovenia.

The Employment Service is responsible for organising and co-ordinating training programmes for unemployed and redundant workers. Its main responsibilities are:

- placement services;
- unemployment insurance;
- employment policy programmes and measures;
- issue of work permits for foreigners;
- national youth scholarships programme;
- vocational guidance and information; and
- drawing up analytical, developmental and other materials related to the Service's basic activities.

The main institutions representing employers are the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Crafts. According to the Vocational and Technical Education Act, the main responsibilities of the Chambers in the vocational education and training area are to propose those occupations for which programmes of vocational and technical education should be prepared, and to organise and monitor in-company practical training. More specifically, the Chambers are obliged to:

- propose the standards of practical knowledge and skills to be checked at final examinations and/or at master craftsmen, foremen and managerial examinations;
- organise the practical component of final examinations for apprentices and organise master craftsmen, foremen and managerial examinations;
- propose additional training programmes to the appropriate council of experts;
- appoint representatives to final examination committees at short-term and secondary vocational schools;
- verify proposed practical placements for apprentices in enterprises and maintain a register of apprenticeship places and contracts;
- organise the practical in-company component of vocational education;
- offer advice to employers regarding the practical training of apprentices and monitor the performance of such training; and
- organise intermediate examinations to establish if the practical training of apprentices is proceeding well.

Under the Vocational and Technical Education Act, the main responsibility of trade unions, as organisations representing employees, is to ensure that the rights of apprentices guaranteed by the Act, apprenticeship contracts and collective agreements, are respected. The Unions also nominate representatives to the examination committees of vocational schools, for the academic component of examinations, and to the Chambers' examination committees, for the practical component of examinations.

5.1.2 *Advisory/consultative expert bodies*

Three statutory councils of experts are appointed by Government to make decisions on technical matters and to provide expert advice in preparing legislation. These are:

- the Council of Experts for General Education;
- the Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education; and
- the Council of Experts for Adult Education.

The Councils of Experts determine the contents of educational programmes, approve textbooks and educational materials and propose criteria and standards for school equipment. The Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education defines the knowledge standards in vocational education and training, approves the new and modernised vocational education and training programmes and proposes them for approval to the Minister of Education and Sport.

The National Curriculum Council and curriculum committees for different types of education, including the Curriculum Committee for Vocational and Technical Education, ceased operations at the beginning of 1999. Outstanding or newly-arising issues related to curricula are now dealt with by the Council of Experts for Vocational and Technical Education. At the end of 1998, the National Committee for Introducing and Monitoring of Innovations and Programmes in Education was established. In 1999, it appointed three 'evaluation' subcommittees for vocational and technical education, for general education and for adult education.

5.2 Decentralisation

The Slovenian system of education is highly centralised. As provided for in the Organisation and Funding of Education Act (Articles 30-32), 14 school boards are to be established, under the Ministry of Education and Sport, as regional school administrative bodies. These boards are intended as a form of decentralisation of the state administration of education. They will be responsible for decisions on administrative matters and for tasks concerning personnel, finance and the organisation of education. In this way, some financial and administrative power will be delegated to the lower-level regional units. However, none of these boards has been established yet.

6. Legislation

Article 57 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (1991) guarantees all citizens equal rights to education and stipulates that: "Education shall be free. Basic education shall be compulsory and shall be financed from state revenues. The State shall provide the opportunity for all citizens to obtain proper education." Article 58 of the Constitution defines the autonomous status of universities.

The current legal regulation of the education system, based on the principles of democracy, autonomy and equal opportunities, was adopted in February 1996. It includes a set of six acts:

- the Organisation and Funding of Education Act;
- the Pre-school Institutions Act;
- the Elementary School Act;
- the Gymnasiums Act;
- the Vocational and Technical Education Act; and
- the Adult Education Act.

The new legislation is being introduced gradually with a simultaneous provision of the necessary material, personnel and financial resources. The current legal regulation of the higher education system was introduced at the end of 1993 and came into force at the beginning of 1994.

The Organisation and Funding of Education Act (1996) is an "umbrella act" for all areas of education. Among other things, it regulates:

- the aims, organisation and financing of the education system;
- the content of educational programmes, the procedure for their acceptance and implementation, and those responsible for their implementation;
- pilot testing of textbooks;
- the aims, structure and responsibilities of the Councils of Experts;
- the supporting activities and tasks required for carrying out educational activities;
- the purpose, organisation and responsibilities of school boards;
- the requirements for the provision of education;
- the establishment of pre-school institutions and schools;
- the governing boards of public pre-school institutions and schools;
- the provision of public services within the education system on the basis of a licence;
- the financing of the education system; and
- the conditions for pre-school and school employees, and for their education, promotion and contracts.

The following are the other pieces of legislation covering the area of education.

- The Pre-school Education Act (1996) covers the publicly-financed system of pre-school education in kindergartens.
- The Elementary Education Act (1996) regulates the area of primary education. It provides for the gradual extension of primary education to 9 years.
- The Gymnasiums Act (1996) regulates secondary general education.
- The Vocational and Technical Education Act (1996) regulates vocational and professional education at all levels. It provides for educational programmes, conditions of enrolment of apprentices, secondary school pupils and higher school students, training of adults, and the collection and protection of the personal data of persons enrolled in vocational and professional education. The Act covers the entire system of vocational education and training, including post-secondary (non-university) vocational programmes.
- The Adult Education Act (1996) regulates the education and training of persons who have completed primary school education but are neither school nor university students. It sets out the principles of adult education and lays down the rules regarding participation, educational programmes and conditions for educators. It also covers public education institutions, the centres for adult education the financing and the organisation of adult education. The foundations for the certification system are also set out in this Act.
- The Higher Education Act (1993) defines the role and position of universities, faculties, academies of art and higher professional education institutions. It defines the university as an academic community and provides for the autonomy of higher education in general. It also regulates the following issues: university organs, study and research programmes, national higher education programmes, teaching staff, students, and the financing and control of higher education. Under the Higher Education Act, parliament passed the Regulation on the Reorganisation of the University of Ljubljana and the University of Maribor in 1994 (amended in 1995), in which the status of both universities was brought into line with the provisions of the Higher Education Act.

  At the end of 1999, the Act on Changes and Amendments to the Higher Education Act was passed by Parliament. The majority of these changes will take effect during 2000.
- The School Inspection Act (1996) specifies the bodies which inspect schools and how inspections are to be carried out.
- The Act on the Implementation of Special Rights of Members of the Italian and Hungarian Nationalities in the Area of Education (1982) applies in the Slovenian-Hungarian and Slovenian-Italian ethnically mixed regions. Members of the majority language group living in these regions are taught the language of the minority. The curricula for history, geography, literature and art have been adapted to include basic information on the history, geography and culture of the minority. In this respect, special attention is given to teacher training.

The Act on Guidance for Children with Special Needs, the Act on Music Schools and the Act on Final Examinations (*Matura*) have already been prepared but are still to be passed by parliament.

In the vocational education and training area, the most important legislative acts are the Organisation and Financing of Education Act, the Vocational and Professional Education Act and the Adult Education Act.

Of the legislation covering labour, social and industrial relations issues, the following are of special importance to the vocational education and training area.

- The Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act (1990) guarantees the right to continuing education and training (Article 69: education of workers). The Act defines the rights and duties of workers as regards continuing education and the improvement of knowledge and training according to the needs of the work process, and vocational-professional development. The new Act on Changes and Amendments to the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act came into force in October 1998.
- Article 26 of the General Collective Agreement for the Commercial Sector (1993) and Article 32 of the Collective Agreement for the Non-Commercial Sector (1993) both provide for workers' rights to education in their own interest as well as that of the company or institution where they are employed. The company or institution has the right to send employees on educational and training courses.
- The Act on Crafts (1994) defines the conditions for becoming a trainer of apprentices in craft workshops and small businesses. It also regulates the master craftsmen examinations, which are the responsibility of the Chamber of Crafts. This Act requires that anyone who wishes to start his or her own small craft-type business must pass a master craftsman examination.

7. Financing of initial and continuing training

Public education is funded from the national and municipal budgets. The national budget covers the following in their entirety:

- higher education institutions and post-secondary vocational colleges;
- secondary schools and secondary school students' halls of residence; and
- schools and institutions for children with special needs.

Local communities partially fund capital investment, maintenance and equipment expenditure for elementary school education, elementary music education and pre-school education. Elementary music schools and pre-school institutions are also financed by contributions from parents, according to their financial means. Local communities provide funding from their own resources, such as income and other taxes. Economically underdeveloped municipalities, which cannot be financed fully from such resources, receive additional funds from the state budget.

The Ministry of Education and Sport is the key body responsible for allocating funds in the field of education. It receives funds from the national budget and allocates the money to schools. The Ministry of Education and Sport thus covers the salaries of teachers, the equipment costs of schools and all planned school activities. Parents of pupils and students contribute towards the costs of all additional school activities, such as extra courses, study materials, excursions and study visits.

The allocation of public funds to schools is standardised. Funds are allocated to individual public educational institutions in accordance with their educational programme, the number of classes and the number of students enrolled in individual programmes. As far as salaries are concerned, the scale of remuneration and the promotion of teachers and other staff are determined by law. The state and the trade unions also determine some specific features of the collective agreement, and this has an additional effect on the system of salaries in this field.

The acquisition of equipment and major maintenance works on school buildings is planned within long-term investment programmes for educational institutions. In the case of pre-school institutions and elementary schools, the costs of investing in buildings and equipment are shared between the Ministry of Education and Sport and the municipalities. In general, municipalities do not contribute to the regular operating costs of schools, but they are expected to contribute to larger-scale investments, such as new school buildings and expensive equipment.

Schools and residential halls can generate their own revenue through the sale of their products and services on the market. Schools manage their incomes independently, but when they distribute the surplus, they must follow basic rules stipulating that a certain percentage must be reinvested in maintenance and equipment.

At present, the financing of the education system for young people is highly centralised. Under the Organisation and Financing of Education Act, 14 regional school boards corresponding to administrative regions are to be established as part of a reorganisation of the Ministry of Education and Sport. One task of the school boards will be to allocate national funds at the regional level. Some financial and administrative powers would thereby be delegated to regional units. However, the regional school boards have not yet been established.

In 1995, education spending was 12.64% of total public expenditure in Slovenia according to calculations by the Ministry of Education and Sport, following the UNESCO method. As a share of GDP, education spending was 5.55% of GDP in 1994, 5.85% in 1995, 5.68% in 1996 and 6.0% in 1998. Public funding for vocational and technical education accounted for 0.64% of GDP in 1996.

The Organisation and Financing of Education Act allows private kindergartens and schools at all levels. In order to receive financial support from the state, private kindergartens and schools must have their programmes verified and approved by the state and sign a special licence agreement with the Ministry of Education and Sport. Private schools may charge tuition fees. The tuition fee is limited to 25% of the cost per student in a public school.

In the case of vocational education and training, municipalities and enterprises are expected to participate jointly in the establishment and funding of schools, in particular as regards investment in school buildings and training equipment. However, vocational education and training for young people is currently financed mainly from the national budget, through the Ministry of Education and Sport. Of the public funds available for education in 1995, 9.14% was allocated to secondary-level vocational and professional education of young people.

With the reform of the vocational education and training system and the introduction of the dual system, employers will be obliged to contribute towards the cost of organising and providing practical training in vocational education. Employers will be required to organise practical placements for apprentices, to carry out practical training of apprentices by paid trainers and to pay apprentices a monthly remuneration for the duration of their apprenticeship contracts.

The minimum gross monthly financial remuneration is defined by the Vocational and Professional Education Act. For the first year of practical training it must be at least 10% of the average gross income in the commercial sector, for the second year at least 15%, and for the third and the fourth years at least 20% of this income. Apprentices are entitled to social insurance for the duration of their apprenticeship contracts. According to the law, the state covers the social insurance of apprentices for the first year of apprenticeship contracts and 50% of their insurance for the following years. The other 50% will be covered by employers.

However, it should be noted that employers are currently arguing for special funds to cover at least some of the costs borne by enterprises under the dual system. The costs of practical training for apprentices can be quite high, in particular for small businesses.

Some adult education and training programmes are financed from the state budget. The Adult Education Act provides that public funds shall be allocated on the basis of the National Programme of Adult Education. Both the Ministry of Education and Sport and Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs allocate public funds to adult education programmes. During the 1990's, public expenditure on adult education has been increasing, but it is still low. Between 1992 and 1995, adult education expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure on education, excluding the pre-school level, increased from 0.2% to 1.6% and the share of this expenditure in GDP from 0.01% to 0.08% (Bevc, 1997). The Slovenian Adult Education Centre estimates that increases in state funding for adult education made it possible to only maintain existing levels as opposed to introducing any new development initiatives.

Most adult educational and training programmes are market-oriented and participants must contribute financially. Although they are not required to do so, employers often pay for their employees to take part but no information or estimate is available on their average annual expenditure.

There are, as yet, no educational funds set up by the social partners, with the exception of one which was established in the craft sector to support the training of employees in small businesses. The collective agreement requires craftsmen to pay 1% of their gross incomes into this fund, which they can draw on to finance the training of their employees.

Employment programmes, including education, training and retraining programmes, for the unemployed are financed exclusively from the national budget. In 1998, the share of public funds allocated to employment policy was 1.3% of GDP, of which 0.4% went towards active employment measures and 0.9% towards passive measures. The proportion of public funds earmarked for active employment policy measures and programmes has been increasing. According to Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs estimates, the share of expenditure on active employment policy programmes increased to 0.5% of GDP in 1999, while the share for passive employment policy decreased to 0.8%. In 1998, 53.4%, by far the highest proportion of all Employment Service expenditure went on unemployment benefits. In the active employment policy measures category, the highest share of expenditure went on both the public works and 'preparation of the unemployed for employment' programmes.

8. Bilateral and multilateral donor contribution to vocational education and training

8.1 *Results of the Phare Vocational Education and Training Reform programme*

The Phare Vocational Education and Training Reform programme (SL9405) started in 1994 with a total budget of € 3 million. Most programme activities were completed by the end of 1998.

The programme was integrated into the process of national reform of education and training and involved highly motivated actors because it was connected to the national development policy for vocational education and training. This led to systematic changes in the structures of vocational education and training.

The Needs Analysis and Curriculum Development sub-programme, whose aim was to establish and implement four new types of educational programmes - post-secondary vocational programmes, vocational courses, dual system training and master craftsmen, foremen and managerial examinations - was a key component of the programme. The training needs analysis and adaptation of the vocational education and training system to labour market needs meant a move away from a state directed and controlled system to a market oriented system, similar to the systems in European Union countries.

The new programmes, especially the dual system programmes, have established a link between the social partners. Social partnership was one of the most innovative components of the Phare programme. However, strengthening the links and defining the responsibilities require some time. On the one hand there was quite a strong involvement of chambers, but on the other hand the participation of the trade unions was missing. The trade unions still fail to see clearly their role in vocational education and training.

The selection of pilot occupational areas was successfully concluded, in line with the national innovation priorities and based on a consensus between the partners. Problems arose only in the fields of textiles and leather processing, which have a high unemployment rate and low employment opportunities. At that time, the Government's view was that these two sectors were of strategic importance for the economic reform programme and that their successful reconstruction, with a suitably trained and skilled workforce, could stimulate this reform. Unfortunately, the relationship between the work and educational spheres was not strong enough to implement this idea. Overall representation of the regions was also good and only the Karst and the Primorje regions were missing.

The post-secondary vocational programmes in mechanical engineering, electronics, energy production and supply, catering and tourism, were the most successful. Five new post-secondary vocational colleges have been established with the assistance of the Phare programme.

The most difficult problem was how to reach a consensus regarding the dual education system and the preparation of the master craftsmen, foremen and managerial examinations, as integration between education and work is crucial if they are to be implemented successfully. Without doubt, pupils who have completed the dual system programme are better equipped with the necessary labour market skills. Contacts between employers and apprentices are established at an earlier stage, which helps make the schools more responsive and the teaching more relevant. The programme is criticised, however, for its high costs and limited general knowledge. It can also be difficult to continue one's studies on completion of a dual system programme and it does not offer enough opportunities for horizontal mobility. In order to make the system work, there need to be strong links between schools, chambers, trade unions, employers and the government. In future, the dual system should be seen as part of lifelong learning.

The following weaknesses can be identified:

- there were delays in the preparation and implementation of the curriculum development instructions and the programmes for teacher training and training of headmasters and directors;
- the occupational classification for the new programmes was also late in preparation, which meant that there was insufficient innovation;
- curricula for new occupational fields were not developed;
- promotion of the dual system was inadequate; and
- more emphasis needs to be given to open and distance learning and the development of modules for adults in order to make lifelong learning possible for everyone.

The second sub-programme, which dealt with teacher training, was probably the weakest element of the whole programme and was subject to continual delay. From the point of view of content, the training programmes for co-ordinators, headmasters and directors and mentors in companies were the most successful.

To improve implementation and results in this field, the following steps should be taken:

- prepare a training needs analysis, covering all teachers, prior to carrying out training programmes;
- adapt teacher training to different sectors and schools;
- teachers and trainers should be made aware of the constant change in the work environment and of the necessity to adapt the teaching and training system to labour market needs;
- improvement of educators' skills must be ongoing;
- teaching methods must be adjusted to the needs of future occupations; and
- organisational solutions must be found to the implementation problems.

The partnership activities with schools in the European Union was the sub-programme from which the pilot schools benefited the most. In spite of the fact that there were problems in finding partners because of lack of experience, schools were, in the main, successful and some also participated in the Central and Eastern Europe network. Reciprocal study visits made it possible to exchange experience, compare educational systems and teaching methods and to introduce new teaching methods in Slovenian schools.

The Upgrading of Teaching Equipment and Materials sub-programme enabled schools to improve their information and communication equipment and also led to the procurement of special equipment for practical subjects. A minimum quality standard for further procurement was set, which, when implemented, led to improvements in teaching quality.

The value of the results and experience gained can be maximised through the dissemination of information and the introduction of the pilot results into the regular system. The pilot schools included in the Policy Development and Dissemination of Results sub-programme exchanged views regularly at monthly meetings. They passed their experience to other Slovenian schools and the wider public through exhibitions, seminars, workshops and conferences. The results, opinions and further guidelines and recommendations were published in various professional publications, daily magazines and newspapers and radio and television broadcasts. The programme ended with a conference, at which the possibilities of implementing a number of the new ideas in different programmes and by different means in the future were discussed.

8.2 *The Phare Modernisation of Curricula, Certification and Assessment programme*

The Phare Modernisation of Curricula, Certification and Assessment in Vocational Education programme is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs to use European Union Phare support for the ongoing reform of the Slovenian vocational education system. It follows up work undertaken under the Phare Vocational Education and Training Reform 1994 programme, which came to an end in 1997.

The Modernisation of Curricula, Certification and Assessment programme is expected to contribute to developing a vocational education and training system in Slovenia that will be flexible, innovative and sustainable. More particularly, it is expected that with Phare support the vocational education and training system will:

- move towards integrating youth and adult education;
- become a pillar of a lifelong learning system; and
- help to successfully integrate Slovenia into the European Union.

The programme reflects an increased awareness among Slovenian policy makers that more attention must be paid in the future to improving the quality of vocational education and to introducing more future-oriented policies, in line with the general developments in other countries. In the mid- and long-term this will serve both integration into the European Union and development of a lifelong learning system.

The general objectives of the programme are:

- to strengthen the innovative and qualitative aspects of the ongoing vocational education and training reform; and
- to support the formulation and implementation of pre-accession measures in the area of vocational education and training, including the development of a certification system.

There are two components in the Modernisation of Curricula, Certification and Assessment Programme.

Component A, *Vocational Education and Training*, has the following objectives:

- to support the development and introduction of systematic monitoring, evaluation and quality assessment of the new types of vocational education and training now being developed and to broaden the results and experiences of the SL-94.05 Phare Vocational Education and Training Reform programme to the whole vocational education and training sector;

- to reinforce innovative capacities at different levels within the vocational education and training system in order to facilitate adaptation to changes in the economy;
- to support the Ministry of Education and Sport in the refinement and implementation of its pre-accession strategy and the continued 'Europeanisation' of the vocational education and training sector; and
- to support the Ministry of Education and Sport in its efforts to modernise the financial/administrative system for vocational education and training.

Component B, *Professional Qualifications and Certification*, has the following objectives:

- to support the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs in developing a clear certification system, compatible with Ministry of Education and Sport standards and European Union developments;
- to draw up accreditation and assessment procedures;
- to develop a registration and information system for certification;
- to train staff and other key actors in managing the certification system; and
- to integrate the certification system into the formal education system.

The two components are very much interrelated. A certification system is a core element of a modern, flexible vocational education and training system and provides a framework for identifying innovation in vocational education and training. It also helps link youth and adult education and, therefore, is a necessary element in the development of a lifelong learning system.

The aims of the Modernisation of Curricula, Certification and Assessment programme will be implemented in line with the following working principles:

- make maximum use of experience, networks and initiatives from the earlier Phare Vocational Education and Training Reform programme;
- respect the expertise, role and responsibilities that various Slovenian organisations and institutions have developed;
- import international expertise of a substantial nature while relying on local administrative expertise;
- put emphasis on close co-operation and partnership between foreign and local experts as well as between local and European Union institutions during the implementation of programme activities;
- create learning conditions for local staff and counterparts with the intention of developing a local expert capacity for the management of future European Union programmes, including structural funding; and
- ensure coherence between the activities of the two components of the modernisation programme.

8.3 Leonardo da Vinci programme

The Leonardo da Vinci programme started in 1994 and, with Leonardo II, which started on 01 January 2000, will continue until 31 December 2006. The Leonardo da Vinci programme promotes innovative initiatives to develop the knowledge, abilities and skills needed for successful integration into working life. It offers wide opportunities for co-operation with other Community programmes and Initiatives – especially Socrates and Youth and the European Social Fund.

All projects must aim at improving the quality of vocational training by developing something new or by improving the existing training. They must focus on content, methodology, ways of cooperation, other organisational aspects, training materials, multimedia/information technology etc. Training can be directed towards certain trades, occupations, tasks, industries and/or regions. The unemployed and groups that need special training are prime target groups, as, too, are projects that strengthen language competencies.

Slovenia entered the Leonardo da Vinci programme in May 1999 and from 1999 onwards Slovenian organisations can fully participate in project applications.

8.3.1 *Pilot projects*

Pilot projects are the vehicle for improving quality and promoting innovation in vocational training. Both aims should be integrated into the proposal in such a way that tools, methods or concepts, and materials developed during the project, can be used in, or adapted for different environments.

Actions are intended to contribute to:

- promoting the design, development, testing, assessment and dissemination of innovative vocational training products, tools, methods and approaches including training for trainers and guidance counsellors;
- developing the use of ICTs in vocational training;
- developing new vocational training tools, services and products using ICTs which will promote access to vocational training;
- supporting the creation of transnational open and distance vocational training networks intended to make the broadest possible range of innovative teaching tools and methods available to the general public (multimedia educational products, web sites, remote tutoring);
- designing, testing and validating new approaches to vocational training designed for new work situations;
- developing innovative tools for information and counselling in vocational training in the context of lifelong learning.

In the 1999 Call for Proposals, there were eight Slovenian organisations which acted as project promoters and means that they found at least two partners from other European countries for their project idea. The project promoters are fully responsible for the project activities.

Out of eight projects submitted, five were selected by the Commission, which is a very high percentage. Experiences from other countries shows that the average percentage of selected projects is 25% This shows that Slovenian organisations do not lack good ideas and that they also know how to set about implementing them.

Successful project applications include:

- E-NET enterprise together with partners from Italy, Greece, Romania and the Czech Republic on New Job Opportunities Through Networking on Technical Innovations in Energy and Environment Techniques;
- Gymnasium Idrija Lace School with partners from Denmark, Hungary and Slovakia on Application of Lace-Making Tradition in Tourism and Employment Policy in Europe;

- Secondary School for Agriculture and Milk Processing in Kranj with partners from Portugal, France and Italy on Leonardo da Vinci Dairy Education Module;
- School Centre Novo Mesto, Post-secondary Vocational College with partners from France, Germany and Greece on Quality Improvement of Practical Training for Students and Co-operation Between a Post-Secondary Vocational College and an Enterprise; and
- International Institute for Tourism with partners from Ireland and Austria on Education and Training of National Experts in Tourism – Establishing a Tourist Training Centre).

Besides these five project promoters, 17 Slovenian organisations participate as partners in pilot projects submitted by promoters from other European countries.

8.3.2 Mobility

Slovenian organisations also participate in the mobility projects of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme.

A "placement/exchange" is a period of training and/or work experience spent by a beneficiary in a host organisation in another country under co-operation arrangements involving training organisations, including universities, and undertakings. It aims at improving the skills and employability of the beneficiaries. Wherever possible, placements should assume recognition, under the practices in the country of origin, of aptitudes and of skills acquired during the placement.

Twenty-seven Slovenian organisations have participated in these projects. They include: several secondary vocational and technical schools; small and medium sized enterprises; the Chamber of Crafts; the Chamber of Commerce – Maribor Regional Unit; the Employment Service; the University of Maribor; Mladinska knjiga publishing house; and others). By June 2000, these organisations will send the following groups abroad:

- 57 young people involved in initial vocational training, for an average period of three weeks;
- 8 young skilled workers, for an average period of four months; and
- 85 trainers, teachers, mentors and tutors, for an average period of two weeks.

8.4 Preparatory activities for the European Social Fund

8.4.1 Preparatory activities for the European Social Fund in Slovenia in 1999 – general overview

In Slovenia, preparatory activities for the European Social Fund started formally in 1998. The European Social Fund became a component of the 1998 Phare programme, following a request from the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, which was appointed national co-ordinator of all preparatory activities related to the Fund.

An inter-ministerial working group on preparation for the Structural Funds, including the European Social Fund, was established. This working group consists of representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Small Business and Tourism, the Ministry of Economic Relations and Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food-processing and the Ministry of Education and Sport.

In November 1999, a three-member group, included in the horizontal Phare Special Preparatory Programme for the European Social Fund, was appointed. The one-year programme, which started in January 1999 and which will be finalised in 2000, consists of three parts:

- the introductory part, which deals with training activities;
- the organisation of a supplementary seminar and a national conference with the main aim of information dissemination; and
- two local/regional conferences intended for a 'professional' public, with the aim of establishing a local/regional network of potential actors, institutions preparing projects and European Social Fund programme users.

The legal framework for structural and cohesion policy is set out in decrees that are directly transferable into national legal regulations when Slovenia enters the European Union. In order to implement the structural policies, Slovenia must adapt its mechanisms and instruments and establish suitable institutional structures for policy implementation.

The Act on Promotion of a Balanced Regional Development is the main regional policy legislation in Slovenia. It specifies the general framework, organisational arrangements, developmental incentives and the criteria for defining the areas with special developmental problems. The second act, the Act on Public Finances, is extremely important for the implementation of structural policy. It introduces unified planning, implementation and programme monitoring procedures, national and international financing and multi-annual state budget planning.

The economic planning documents needed to access the European Structural Funds, have been prepared within the framework of the Special Preparatory Programme. The National Development Plan for the Period 2000-2006, which is based on two background documents, the National Economic Development Strategy and the Regional Development Strategy, was forwarded to the European Commission at the end of October 1999, together with the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis. It sets out the developmental priorities for the period 2000-2002 and will be the basis for gaining the Phare, ISPA and SAPARD pre-accession support.

Besides the establishment of a suitable implementation structure, a lot of effort is also going into preparing the programme content and the legal bases that are pre-requisites for accessing the European Social Fund. In the recent past, programmes co-funded by the European Social Fund were closely linked with the implementation of national employment policy programmes and this link will be reinforced in the programme period 2000-2006 (Decree on the European Social Fund No 1784/1999).

In co-operation with the European Commission and the European Training Foundation a Background Study for the Employment Policy Review in Slovenia was prepared in 1999. In November 1999, the Government approved two key documents:

- Strategic Goals of Labour Market Development until 2006, Employment Policy and Implementation Programmes; and
- the National Employment Action Plan for the Period 2000-2001.

They both follow the Amsterdam Treaty, the European Union employment guidelines and the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation and Development recommendations for labour market flexibility in Slovenia. Both documents were jointly prepared by the social partners and various institutions active in the labour market field in Slovenia, which means that all participants accept responsibility for implementing the tasks set out in the documents.

The paper "Strategic Goals of Labour Market Development until 2006, Employment Policy and Implementation Programmes" is based on the Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act, the Background Study for the Employment Policy Review in Slovenia as well as the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis.

Taking the current labour market situation as a starting-point, the document sets out the following strategic aims of labour market development in the period 2000-2006:

- improving the educational attainment level of the labour force;
- reducing unemployment and structural imbalances by cutting the proportion of the long-term unemployed to about 40% and the proportion of the unemployed with no vocational qualifications to around 25% of all unemployed persons;
- guaranteeing participation in active employment policy programmes to all the unemployed who have not found a job after being unemployed for 6 months;
- reducing regional labour market imbalances; and
- achieving more than 1% annual employment growth in the period 2000-2006, a reduction of the Labour Force Survey unemployment rate to about 6% and of the registered unemployment rate to about 9%.

These two documents present an integrated approach to the problem of unemployment and how to promote employment, which, to achieve its policy aims, presupposes active and harmonised co-operation between the various economic branches, education and financial sectors, and the Ministry of Science and Technology. The strategy is also based on a multi-level active social partnership in planning, implementing and financing the four-pillar employment policy as described in the National Employment Action Plan for the Period 2000-2001.

Priorities for 2000-2001

The following are the main priorities for the period 2000-2001.

- With regard to increasing the employability of the workforce, priority will be given to measures preventing a further increase in long-term unemployment, particularly among young people, by improving the rate of acquisition and upgrade of key knowledge and skills. For all other target groups, the emphasis will on a transfer from passive to active measures. Further reform of vocational and technical education and training, particularly further development of dual system programmes, post-secondary vocational and higher professional programmes, and adapting programmes to the changing labour market and technological requirements will enable an easier transition of young people from school to work.

  The two key actors are the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Sport, while the key implementing institutions are the Employment Service, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training and the Adult Educational Centre. In order to implement the programme on increasing employability, all three institutions will have to be developed to the level of similar institutions abroad, since the present underdevelopment hinders progress. It will also be necessary to encourage further development of a modern network of specialised non-governmental institutions, which will be delegated partial or complete responsibility for employment policy implementation.

- In the field of promoting entrepreneurship, the focus will be on encouraging an entrepreneurial culture among various target groups, including young people, women and people from rural areas. Along with the various types of training, this will include the creation of conditions for the implementation of entrepreneurial initiatives. For this reason, measures in this area cut across four different ministries: the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs; the Ministry of Small Business and Tourism; the Ministry of Science and Technology; and the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The national implementing institutions are the Employment Service, the Slovenian Development Agency and the Slovenian Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Promotional Centre, which should become the key co-ordinating and implementing institution. In order to successfully implement this task, the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Promotional Centre needs a complete restructuring and a new management system.

Successful implementation of this pillar is not possible without the committed involvement of employers' associations, particularly the Chamber of Crafts and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Furthermore, to attain the goals specified, closer co-operation with local communities is essential. This could be achieved by establishing a promotional network at local and regional levels as well as by decentralising management of development initiatives, as far as possible.

- In the field of promoting adaptability of enterprises and employees, the key task will be the development of active social partnerships. These partnerships must ensure that a suitable balance is struck between the enterprises' needs for introducing modern work organisation and flexible relations between employers and employees, on the one hand, and the need to guarantee adequate job-security for employees, on the other. The job-security of employees can best be guaranteed by developing a higher level of knowledge and skills, which, in turn, will increase their flexibility.

  To ensure stable employment growth, priority will be given to measures increasing the competitiveness of enterprises by introducing products with higher added value levels, by developing modern marketing systems, and in particular, by introducing more efficient production process management systems. To do this, managerial knowledge and skills levels must be raised and more effort must be put into introducing modern work practices and organisation.

  This requires the revision and modernisation of all existing systems of state aid and the introduction of instruments acceptable to the European Union. There is also a need for an immediate review of regulations governing economic activities and labour market relations as well as the operation of not-for-profit economic entities.

  Attention will be concentrated on programmes aiming to revitalise enterprises' information, technological, planning and personnel capacities as well on encouraging links among them in different fields. More emphasis will be put on promoting the internationalisation of enterprises by attracting strategic partners and new investment.

  Responsibility for this programmes lies with the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Nutrition, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Economic Relations and Development and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. The key implementing institution will be the Slovenian Development Company, which will need to be restructured, in terms of organisation and personnel so as to ensure a more efficient managerial system.

- In the area of ensuring equal opportunities, it is apparent that the range of the 'at-risk' groups among the unemployed is increasing. The number of disabled persons has doubled in recent years, those aged over 40 represent already half of the unemployed population and the share of the unemployed with various kinds of difficulties in getting a job has reached 25%.

  In 2000 and 2001 this priority will be tackled, primarily, through the long-term training and employment programme for disabled people, adopted in 1999. The emphasis will be on new types of employment in not-for-profit types of organisation, such as integration enterprises, co-operatives and intermediate workshops as well as, in particular, the introduction of a quota system for employing disabled persons.

Implementation of this pillar is closely related to activities in the areas of increasing employability, promoting entrepreneurship, and developing local employment initiatives.

In the field of assuring equal opportunities for both genders, special attention will be given to support mechanisms which will enable greater participation of women in training programmes, non-traditional types of employment, entrepreneurship and management.

Responsibility for these activities will lie with the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, while the key implementing institutions will be the Employment Service, the Institute of Pension and Disability Insurance as well as specialised institutions for training and employment of disabled persons.

- To implement the National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) guidelines in 2000 and 2001, an allocation of 1% of GDP in 2000 and 1.2% in 2001 will be needed. Active employment policy measures will require an allocation of 0.6% and 0.8% of GDP from the Public Assets budget line in 2000 and 2001, respectively, in addition to 0.15% from the Economic Development budget line, each year.

  A wide range of different instruments will be used to fund the Action Plan's implementation. Enterprises and local communities are expected to contribute 30% of public funds and € 25 million is expected from the Phare Programme, of which the majority will be available in 2001. Seventy per cent will be in the form of repayable loans from the Bank for Social Development of the Council of Europe and other international financial institutions.

8.4.2 *The Preliminary National Development Plan 2000-2002 and human resources development*

The Agenda 2000 Report of the European Commission forms the back-drop to the preparation of the Preliminary National Development Plan. This comprehensive outline of the perspectives for the development of the European Union and its policies beyond the year 2000 sets out the basis of a reinforced pre-accession strategy, its instruments and the forms of assistance to the applicant countries. Besides the 'institution building' and 'investment in European Union compliance', the pre-accession assistance aims at the gradual familiarisation of the applicants with European Union policies, procedures, programmes and initiatives, including the Structural Funds. A part of the re-oriented Phare Programme investment is now intended for the promotion of economic and social cohesion, i.e. 'development measures' similar to those that the European Union supports through the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund. In addition to Phare, the pre-accession aid to be granted to the applicant countries will consist of two new instruments – SAPARD and ISPA. The SAPARD programme aims to promote sustainable growth in agriculture and integrated rural development, while ISPA is directed mainly at bringing the applicant countries' infrastructure up to European Union standards, particularly with regard to transport and the environment.

This new approach is similar to that used in the internal Structural Funds, whereby the preparation of a consistent national development plan as a framework for the content, organisation and financing of development programs is a pre-requisite to receiving funding. Following the new Phare guidelines, the applicant countries were asked to prepare their first preliminary national development plans for 2000-2002 within the Phare 2000 programming exercise. Although the Phare Programme does not yet represent a real pre-structural instrument, funding applications for investment in economic and social cohesion has to be justified in a national development document and concentrated in a limited number of regions.

The task to prepare the Phare National Development Programme was entrusted to the Ministry of Economic Relations and Development, which also leads the Special Preparatory Programme for European Structural Funds in Slovenia. The work, in which the members of the Special Preparatory Programme Steering Committee and its subcommittee participated, started in September 1999 and was concluded with a national development document adopted by the Slovenian Government in November 1999. The circumstances surrounding the drafting of this plan, particularly the lack of experience and time, did not allow for a completely methodologically consistent document. However, valuable experience, inter-sectoral working relations and the foundations for better planning of the preparation of the National Development Plan 2000-2006, which must be finalised by 30 June 2001, have been created.

The Phare National Development Programme 2000-2002 sets out two fundamental development objectives for 'structural' measures in Slovenia:

- to reduce the gap between the levels of economic and social development in Slovenia and in the European Union by increasing output at a higher rate and by increasing the potential for long-term jobs, and
- to reduce imbalances in development between regions in Slovenia.

The development strategy to achieve these two objectives will focus on six priority areas:

- the productive capacity of the enterprise sector;
- economic infrastructure;
- human resources skills and employment;
- restructuring the agricultural sector;
- environmental protection; and
- regional development.

The chapter on human resources development has been finalised by the working team in charge of European Social Fund preparations in Slovenia. The objectives of this strategic framework draw on: the Strategic Goals of Labour Market Development until 2006; Employment Policy and Implementation Programmes; the National Employment Action Plan 2000-2001; the White Paper on Education of the Republic of Slovenia (1995); the Starting Points for the National Higher Education Plan (1997); and the National Adult Education Plan (1998).

Unfortunately, the team did not have clear methodological guidelines. The chapter on human resources development strategic priorities was structured around the four European employment policy pillars instead of around the five European Social Fund policies as agreed with the European Commission. The question of the extent of human resources development remains open and will have to be tackled during the preparation of the National Development Plan 2000-2006.

The chapter begins by setting the main objective of human resources development policy as supporting economic and social change through education, training, employment and regional development measures. Economic, demographic and social trends in Slovenia as well as the structural characteristics of its labour force highlight the importance of three labour market problems that must be addressed by these measures:

- the need to develop new qualifications, to improve educational levels and qualifications as well as the ability of the Slovenian workforce to adapt to new technological and social environments;

- the continued job shortages over recent years and hence the continued problem of unemployment, in particular, structural unemployment, unemployment among the young and the unemployment disparities between regions; and
- the need to intervene effectively on behalf of all categories of disadvantaged groups and help them to overcome or reduce the effect of the obstacles to their socio-economic integration.

The Phare National Development Programme 2000-2002 sets out the following more specific objectives for Slovenia in the area of human resource development:

- to raise educational levels and to improve the qualification and adaptability of the workforce;
- to reduce structural and regional imbalances;
- to raise the level of employment in line with economic growth;
- to ensure the participation of the unemployed in active employment policy measures; and
- to ensure equal opportunities on the labour market, thus preventing economic and social exclusion of different categories of disadvantaged and 'at-risk' population groups.

The main purpose of this chapter in the strategic part of the Phare National Development Programme 2000-2002 was to give a comprehensive frame of reference for economic and social cohesion in the priority area of human resources development and employment. The second part of the document concentrates on raising the productivity of the enterprise sector, improving the economic infrastructure and quality of life and promoting a balanced regional development, and only touches on human resources development and employment measures in the context of Phare Programme support.

The challenge for the year 2000 is the preparation of 'integrated' projects, which would translate the priority orientations into actions agreed between the regional and national development plans and the relevant actors. As was the case with the drafting of the Phare National Development Programme, methodological guidelines are not yet completely clear. However, in view of the proven preparedness for co-operation between the state and the regions, trust in the common sense and past project experience, the exercise will certainly end with substantial gains on the regional and national levels.

The above analysis leads to two main conclusions:

- the Phare National Development Programme 2000-2002 remains a living and evolving document, which will be updated as the country's own strategy on economic and social cohesion develops and the European Union planning and programming documents are finalised; and
- the preparation process has proved to be as important as the content, since it gave an excellent learning opportunity for strategic and project planning at the intersection of different areas of action at both the regional and national levels.

8.4.3 Preparatory activities for the establishment of the National Training Institute in Slovenia

The establishment of a National Training Institute in the ten pre-accession countries is part of the European Union accession strategy drawn up and financed by the Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission in the framework of the Special Preparatory Programme on European Social Fund activities. The European Training Foundation was appointed by the European Commission to assist in the establishment of the National Training Institute and the training of two training managers, appointed by the national government in each case.

The overall aim is to develop the capacity of the ten National Training Institutes to organise and provide training of governmental officials and other interested parties in working of all structural funds and to highlight the linkage between the European Employment Strategy and the scope for the European Social Fund interventions.

Considering the inter-sectoral character of the National Training Institute in Slovenia it was decided to establish it as part of the Centre for Vocational Education and Training and as an integral part of the Special Preparatory Programme on the European Social Fund. The National Training Institute works in close co-operation with the European Union Programmes Agency, the National Vocational Education and Training Observatory and under the directorship of the Centre for Vocational Education. The National Training Institute's functions will be domestic but it will have the option of networking outside Slovenia in order to achieve its aims.

The main objectives of the National Training Institutes are as follows:

- establish the national European Social Fund training facilities which will build on outcomes achieved during the Special Preparatory Programme for the European Social Fund programme;
- identify the target groups that need or will need European Social Fund training;
- provide continuous training on European Social Fund measures, on the national, regional and local levels, for administrators and project promoters;
- raise awareness of the European Social Fund as one of the most important mechanisms of national economic restructuring and employment policy; and
- develop and maintain a network, and the necessary supporting databases, of all the actors in European Social Fund projects.

8.5 Phare Cross-Border Co-operation Programme

Slovenia has been actively involved in the Phare Cross-Border Co-operation programme for almost five years now. A number of projects have been successfully completed and they have already proved their significance for the development of border areas and regions. Priority has been given to projects in the area of transport networks and border crossings, environment, economy (especially small and medium-sized enterprises), agriculture, tourism and human resources development. The experience of working on committees and institutions, which, with the support of European Union partner countries, enable programming, implementation and monitoring of the programme implementation, has proved extremely valuable in terms of the acquisition of project management knowledge and skills. In the future the programme will be more closely linked with the Interreg programme, which is one of the structural policy instruments for the development of European Union border regions.

8.5.1 Slovenia/Italy

The Phare Cross-Border Co-operation programme, between Slovenia and the Italian regions of Friuli Venezia Giulia, and Veneto, started in 1994 and includes more than 50 projects, 23 of which have been successfully completed, at a cost of € 13 million of Phare funds. It should be emphasised that Phare Cross-Border Co-operation and Interreg programmes are harmonised, although the procedures and areas of work differ. One of the biggest shortcomings in Slovenia, especially in the Slovenian-Italian border region, is the lack of a regional structure. Until now, local actors have not been in a position to present joint integrated projects for funding or to implement approved projects in accordance with European Union rules. The Phare Cross-Border Co-operation 1999 project, approved on November 10, 1999, with the title 'Regional Development Structure in the Slovenian-Italian Border Region' could be a significant turning point. Its basic objective is to establish appropriate regional development structures and to train local actors in the implementation of various kinds of project activities for the future. The project activities are focused on regional development, establishment of information infrastructure, human resources development, technological development and small and medium-sized enterprise development. Five sub-regions are included in the project: Posočje; Goriška; Vipavska; Karst; and the Coastal sub-region). Human resources development activities focus on the problem of redundant workers at the international border crossing of Vrtojba and the establishment of the Human Resource Development Fund in the region, drawing on the knowledge and experience of the Maribor Human Resources Development Fund. This should enable closer co-operation between institutions on both sides of the border.

8.5.2 *Slovenia/Austria*

Slovenian/Austrian cross-border co-operation started in 1995, when Austria became a European Union member state and since then Slovenia has received € 12 million. Priority was given to projects with an inter-sectoral and regional development component. The enthusiasm for seeking Phare funding for economically, socially and culturally depressed border regions, is all the greater because of the exceptional cross-border impact of development projects. These include:

- new partnerships between Slovenian and Austrian economic entities, associations and regional organisations;
- exchange of experts, transfer of knowledge and experience;
- co-creation, implementation and management of projects;
- joint long-term development initiatives; and
- the opening of borders for people, knowledge and goods.

The majority of projects concern economic development (22) and the environment (9). Many cover wide geographic areas and bring together various ministries and regional and cross-border organisations. Up to this point, 10 projects have been successfully completed.

In the past there were practically no Phare Cross-Border Co-operation projects in the area of human resources development. Within the 1998 programme, one project deals with this area, the 'Regional Human Resources Development Centre Maribor', on the site of a former prison. The establishment of this centre, integrating various kinds of human resources development activities in one location, will allow the Podravje region to develop its human resources potential faster and better. The centre will facilitate the integration of active employment policy measures with education and training in order to preserve the existing jobs, create new employment opportunities and encourage faster and more balanced development of the region.

8.5.3 *Slovenia/Austria/Hungary*

The Slovenia/Austria/Hungary, trilateral cross-border co-operation programme started in 1995. Its peculiarity is the co-operation between the most peripheral and underdeveloped regions of these three countries. This is real cross-border co-operation, as all the participants have co-operated in establishing the three-country landscape park of 'Goričko - Raab - Orszeg', and in the preparation of a joint trilateral development strategy for Pomurje and Prlekija (Slovenia), south-eastern Styria (Austria) and southern Gradiščansko, Železna županija,and Županije Vasi (Hungary). Another peculiarity of the 'Pomurje' Phare Cross-Border Co-operation programme is that alongside the 'trilateral' programme there is also the Phare CREDO programme, covering Prekmurje and Prlekija, which has been running since 1997 and enables a direct connection between the European Union Commission in Brussels, the local secretariat and the contracting organisation. In the budget for 1996, two projects were given priority: 'Establishment of an educational centre for regional development and agricultural entrepreneurship' and the finalisation of the second phase of 'Establishing an Information centre in Goričko'.

8.5.4 Small Projects Fund

The purpose of this fund, whose total budget is € 647,000, is to enable domestic and local organisations to implement small 'people-to-people' projects – on both side of the border. Of the 27 projects approved, with a value ranging between € 5,000 and 30,000, two programmes have already concluded successfully. In future the Small Project Fund will become even more important as the European Union plans to start such programmes in Eastern European countries. In Central Europe, more than 1,000 small projects have been prepared. Slovenia is in the leading group of countries which implement the projects in a decentralised way, which means that decisions on financing are made in the regions. Monitoring and project management is, also, usually carried out through institutions and organisations from the local region.

9. Constraints, challenges and further needs

From the beginning, the reform of vocational education and training in Slovenia was aimed at ensuring better international comparability in occupational standards and structures of vocational education and training. The reform of both initial and adult education and training is being carried out in the context of the country's European Union accession strategy. On the one hand, the vocational education and training system has to be reformed so that it produces an adaptable, flexible and multi-skilled work force on a par with workforces in European Union countries. This can be done by modernising curricula, modernising training, introducing new forms of training, and promoting work and learning integration. The other important task is to develop the structures and organise the institutions in educational, employment and vocational education and training areas so that they are comparable to those in European Union countries. The following are among the several issues that will have to be tackled if these goals are to be achieved.

- The vocational education and training system must be decentralised and mechanisms constructed for integrating bottom-up initiatives into the system. At the moment, the whole education and training system is quite centralised and a top-down approach has applied. The system should be decentralised:
  - at the decision making level, by integrating regional needs and regional solutions into the system);
  - at the financing level, by introducing training funds provided jointly by employers and the state; and
  - at school level, by increasing the autonomy of schools to carry out training programmes and to link up with employers.

  Schools must learn to co-operate with different partners in vocational education and training as well as with other schools, on their own initiative and without the help of the state.

- There must be greater involvement of the social partners in vocational education and training at all levels, from decision making, to co-financing and provision of training. Co-operation with and between the social partners at regional level in search of specific solutions should be supported. Unfortunately, the system still remains the preoccupation of the education sector, in the main. Greater efforts should be made to ensure that training policy and human resources development become an integral part of economic strategy and do not remain isolated in the domain of education. Participation by trade unions is still insufficient and does not match that of employers. In the dual system, in particular, trade unions must also be actively involved in validating occupational qualifications. In the chambers, vocational education and training issues must be processed on a completely professional basis and employers must be supplied with the incentives and the means to do so. Although the Ministry of Education and Sport is the key institution responsible for vocational education and training in Slovenia, the dual system, in particular, is clearly an inter-sectoral issue that cannot be handled by educational legislation alone.

- There is a declining interest in vocational and technical programmes at all levels of education as the unattractive labour market situation reduces the interest of young people in vocational education and training. Greater effort is required to make vocational education and training more attractive and, in particular, to improve the poor image of on-the-job training in enterprises and the status of apprentices. At present, young people prefer to be trained for the same vocation in schools rather than 'on-the-job' in enterprises.

- The review of existing vocational education and training curricula and the preparation of new ones must continue. In addition to some school-based secondary vocational programmes, a number of secondary technical and vocational-technical programmes must also be re-examined, since, hitherto, most attention has been devoted to the renewal and/or preparation of new short-term vocational programmes, secondary vocational/dual system programmes, vocational course programmes and post-secondary vocational programmes. The question of whether it is necessary to establish school-based vocational programme alternatives for all occupations for which dual system programmes exist, must also be answered soon. In the further modernisation of vocational education and training curricula, more emphasis must be placed on the new skills and competencies identified by employers, such as problem solving, adaptability to new work situations, project work and other changes needed to keep pace with the evolving labour market and economy. Different forms of integration of work and learning must be applied in schools, training centres and in companies themselves in order to prepare trainees better for new types of work.

- As part of the drive to modernise curricula, the initial and continuing training of teachers of technical and professional subjects, and the training of trainers must also be modernised. The need for a separate system of teacher training in vocational education and training has been recognised but key political actors must be stimulated to tackle the problems with greater urgency. More analysis of the training needs of vocational teachers is needed and, in particular, special attention must be paid to introducing new pedagogical approaches and methods.

- Development of an appropriate methodology for identifying training needs remains a priority. Occupational standards must be continuously up-dated and adjusted to developments in technology and changing work organisation. This will enable both greater transparency of occupational qualifications in Slovenia and greater mobility of the workforce at European Union level. It would also appear that instructions for preparing occupational standards need to be improved and that additional training of experts preparing occupational standards is required.

- Until now, reform of vocational education and training was carried out, in the main, with young people rather than adults in mind. That must change in the near future. The certification system must be placed at the core of adult education and it is essential that initial and adult education are brought together in a coherent system of lifelong learning.

- At present, only young people may be trained in dual system programmes, although these programmes are equally suitable for training adults and, in particular, the unemployed. The supply of vocational training programmes must be increased to match demand from potential participants and programmes must be adapted to forms of education most appropriate for adults. The possibility of introducing the dual system in short-term vocational education should also be examined. From now on, also, there should be more emphasis on implementing, evaluating and raising the quality of dual system programmes and less on the preparation of new programmes, with the exception of the services sector where new programmes are required.

- The problem of high drop-out rates in vocational education and training must be addressed more systematically. The underlying causes of 'dropping out' must be identified and these must be taken into account when designing training programmes for drop-outs. On the one hand, measures must be developed in the system of initial education and training, to reduce the drop-out rate and, on the other hand, additional adult education programmes must be especially designed to attract drop-outs, with a view to re-inserting them into ordinary education and training schemes and/or providing them with other opportunities to complete their education.

- Regional vocational education and training councils have already proved to be a good forum for regional actors to exchange information, experience and advice. They should be put on a statutory footing and, where they represent an efficient form of regional co-operation, their competencies should be extended to decision-making on questions concerning vocational education and training, in line with the policy of decentralisation from the national to the regional levels. In particular, the experience gained by the regional councils in Velenje and Maribor could be used as a basis for the establishment of such centres in other regions. Education and employment migration trends, indicate a flow between regions and it is therefore necessary already now to plan the horizontal connection of regional councils. It is also necessary to introduce inter-company training centres at the regional level.
- Empirical research on vocational education and training issues should be encouraged. There is a need for applied research on different training-related issues, including case studies of training practices, in-depth studies on specific issues, policy papers, evaluation studies of training programmes and measures etc. Such studies should provide the basis for policy decisions and for planning further development of different programmes. In particular, the innovative programmes should be tracked very closely. An essential element of such tracking should be the monitoring of the career progression of individual graduates, although this should be done not only for graduates from the new or revised programmes but from all programmes.

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